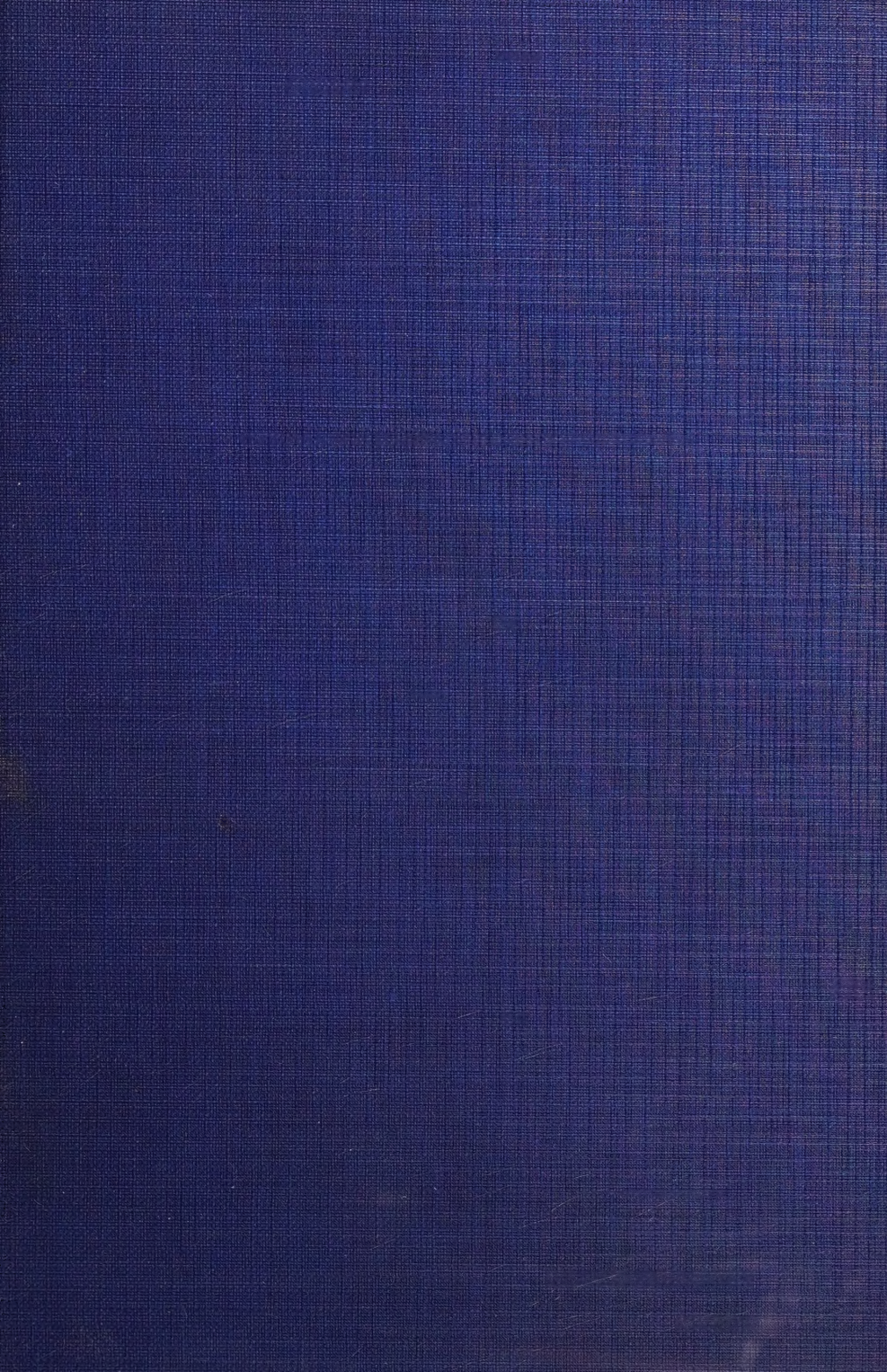




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**AN OUTLINE
OF
JEWISH HISTORY**

BY
S. M. DOUBNOW

IN THREE VOLUMES

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VOL. II.

THE MACCABAEAN AND TALMUDIC ERAS

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§ 1.

Introduction.

Throughout the earliest, or Biblical, period of their history, the Hebrews lived among the nations of the East, and had Egypt, Syria, Assyria, Babylonia and Persia for their neighbors, and during the four centuries of that period the three latter nations had in turns dominated the Hebrew kingdom. Assyria destroyed one-half of it, which was the kingdom of Israel, and Babylonia the other half, the kingdom of Judea, which remained deserted for the fifty years of the Babylonian captivity. Then for two centuries after its rehabilitation, the restored Judea was subject to Persia until this great power, too, declined and fell. Alexander of Macedon, the renowned Greek conqueror, who destroyed the Persian empire and established Grecian supremacy in Western Asia, became the next master of Judea; thus the beginning of the ancient, or post-Biblical period of Hebrew history was contemporary with the ancient, or Graeco-Roman period of universal history. The Hebrews in the East lived for many centuries

among the Greeks and Romans who were the enlightened nations of the west; both these races influenced them to a certain extent by their culture, and the Hebrews with their purely monotheistic religion, influenced the heathen Greeks and Romans in another direction. The people of Israel tried for a long time to withstand the political oppression of Rome, but the unequal struggle ended in their losing what little independence they had enjoyed before they began to rebel. (70 C. E.) From that time on, the Hebrew nation continued its existence as a politically dependent but otherwise autonomous entity.

In its two chief centers, Palestine and Babylonia, the leaders of the people were the "patriarchs" and the "exilarchs." It was during this period, which extended over the end of ancient, and into the beginning of mediaeval, history, (70-1040 C. E.), that the Talmud, second only to the Bible as the spiritual bulwark of Judaism, was written and its doctrines applied to everyday life. This whole period is known, therefore, as the epoch of the Talmud, and before its close the Arabs, who professed the religion of Mohammed, had become the rulers of the Hebrews in Palestine and Babylon.

CHAPTER I

JUDEA UNDER THE DOMINATION OF GREECE— 332-167 B. C.

§ 2.

Alexander the Great.



THE Persians held sway over Judea and the rest of Western Asia for two hundred years, but at last that mighty empire which Cyrus had founded, fell to pieces, as the supremacy in Asia passed gradually into the hands of the Greeks. The Grecian hero, Alexander of Macedon, vanquished Persia, and all its dependencies, including Judea and Syria, became subject to Greece. (332 B. C.) At first the Hebrews refused to submit to Alexander, being unwilling to renounce their allegiance to the Persian king, but when they saw the conqueror approaching Jerusalem with his army to punish their disobedience, they realized that against such overwhelming odds their resistance would be worse than futile. So in token of submission, they sent envoys to meet Alexander, and a legend tells how the High Priest, Jaddua, and other priests, all clad

in their sumptuous vestments of office, left Jerusalem on foot and went to meet Alexander, followed by many of the most distinguished citizens. When the Grecian emperor saw the Hebrew envoys approaching, he dismounted and bowed low before the High Priest at the head of the procession. One of his generals afterwards asked him why he had bowed first before the leader of the Hebrews, and Alexander answered: "Once in Macedonia, I had a dream of conquering Asia, and a vision appeared to me, much resembling this High Priest of the Hebrews. It predicted that my undertaking would bring me victory and great glory besides. The aspect of the Hebrew brought that old dream back to my memory and in his person I bowed before the God he serves." The legend adds that Alexander, accompanied by the High Priest, entered Jerusalem and visited the temple where he made an offering to the God of Israel.

Having annexed Judea to his possessions, he granted the people the privilege of administering their own domestic affairs; so that they were as free to live according to their own religious and social laws as they had been under the Persians. It had become customary for all the nations conquered by Alexander to place statues of him in their temples, but this the Hebrews could not do, as their religion forbade

their keeping any images whatsoever in their places of worship. Instead, they honored the Macedonian Emperor by naming all their sons born during the first year of his rule Alexander after him. This action greatly pleased the king and he granted the Hebrews several new privileges, exempting them from land-taxes during the "Sabbatical years" when their fields lay fallow, and permitting young Hebrews in his army to suspend work on each sabbath day. Judea became part of the province of Coelesyria, or Lower Syria, and was ruled by a governor appointed by Alexander, one Andromachus, whose home was in Samaria. The Samaritans, the old enemies of the Hebrews, chafed under his government and slew him in an uprising. Their deed was mercilessly punished by the emperor who banished them all from Samaria and repopulated the city with Macedonians. Some of the outlying districts on the border were given over to his loyal subjects of Judea.

Then Alexander conquered Egypt and there founded the famous commercial city of Alexandria on the shores of the Mediterranean, which he colonized with Greeks and Hebrews. Many of the Judeans migrated voluntarily to Alexandria where they enjoyed equal civil rights with the Greeks.

§ 3.

Ptolemy Lagos.

The far-flung empire of Alexander, extending into the three continents of Europe, Asia and Africa, did not long survive intact, for on his death in 323 B. C., his generals immediately fell to warring with one another in an attempt to gain possession of the conquered lands. Ptolemy Lagos, a Greek, and one of Alexander's chief military leaders, took Egypt for himself, but not content with that, he invaded Syria and Judea as well, at the head of a great army. Entering Jerusalem, he banished many of the citizens into Egypt. According to the chroniclers, Ptolemy found no difficulty in seizing Jerusalem, for he attacked the capital on the Sabbath, when the Hebrews were debarred by the laws of compulsory rest from bearing arms, and therefore rendered powerless against the enemy.

After many turbulent years, two Greek generals divided the countries of Western Asia and Northern Africa between them. Egypt and Judea remained in the hands of Ptolemy, and Syria, Asia Minor and Babylonia fell to Seleucus. Ptolemy founded a new dynasty of kings in Egypt, the Lagides, and made Alexandria his capital. Seleucus became the founder of a Graeco-Syrian dynasty whose capital was Anti-

och in Asia Minor. The subjugated Hebrews of Syria and Babylonia introduced a new calendar which began with the first year of the reign on Seleucus, 312 B. C., and remained in use for several centuries, especially for written documents and treaties. This is the reason for that era's being known in the Hebrew books as the "era of treaties," *Minian Shtoroth*. The Syrian rulers of the dynasty of Seleucus could not reconcile themselves to the possession by the Egyptians of the neighboring province of Judea, which they considered theirs by right, and they therefore sought an opportunity to reconquer it. But the kings of Egypt maintained their dominion over Judea for a long time, and the Syrians were unable to take it from them.

Ptolemy Lagos (304-283 B. C.) treated all the peoples he conquered with equity and justice, making no exception of the Hebrews. The prisoners of war whom he had banished from Judea were sent to his capital, Alexandria, where they shared the same civil rights as the Greeks. The ablest of the Hebrew warriors were appointed chiefs in Ptolemy's army and supervisors of fortresses. Many Hebrews came of their own free will to live in Egypt, but the natives received them with hostility as aliens, come to usurp their country in the train of the Greek conquerors. The people of Judea proper were granted the same autonomy as they had

enjoyed under Persian domination. The affairs of the community were administered by the High Priest of Jerusalem with the assistance of a council of elders. The High Priest was the official representative of Judea before the Egyptian government and was required to pay into the King's treasury a yearly tax of twenty talents of silver (about \$20,000).

§ 4.

Ptolemy Philadelph.

After Ptolemy I, his son, Ptolemy II, surnamed Philadelph, ruled over Egypt. (283-247 B. C.) During his reign the conditions of the Hebrews were still further ameliorated. Ptolemy II surrounded himself with Greek scientists and poets, and did everything to foster the development of arts and sciences in his realm. Adjoining his palace in Alexandria was the most magnificent museum in the world, which housed collections of the literary and artistic masterpieces of every known nation. The chroniclers relate that Ptolemy II, having heard of the great value of the sacred books of the Hebrews, desired to know them himself and to have an exact Greek translation made, to add to his already vast library. He wrote to Eleazar, the High Priest of Jerusalem, asking him to

send some learned men to Alexandria who could translate the Hebrew books into Greek, and the invitation was accompanied by a princely donation to the temple of Jerusalem. Eleazar gladly complied with the king's wish and sent him seventy-two men of learning, equally conversant with the Hebrew and Greek languages, who took with them an original of the Torah or Pentateuch, for translation. They were given a wonderful reception when they arrived in Alexandria, and the king went often to talk with them while they remained in Egypt, for their learning had won his high admiration. A palace on the island of Pharo, near Alexandria, was set apart for their residence, and there, in quiet and beautiful surroundings, they began the translation. The chronicles add that the translators occupied seventy-two separate chambers, not connected with each other, each man making his own independent version of the text of the Pentateuch; and when the work was finished and all the translations compared, they were found to be absolutely identical in every particular. The translation was presented to Ptolemy in the presence of the elders of the Hebrews of Egypt who asked to be allowed to copy it for circulation in communities where the Hebrews spoke only the Grecian tongue.

Later on all the other books of the Bible were translated into Greek, which brought the

religious literature of the Hebrews to educated Greeks and Romans. The Greek translation of the Bible was known to later generations under the name of the Septuagint, or "translation by seventy interpreters."

§ 5.

Ptolemy III and Ptolemy IV.

Ptolemy II was succeeded by Ptolemy III Euergetes. (246-221 B. C.) A great danger threatened Judea during his reign, for the Syrian kings of the Seleucides dynasty were at war with Egypt and casting covetous eyes upon Judea as well. The Syrians persuaded important citizens of Jerusalem and the High Priest, Onias II, to join with them against Egypt and refuse payment of their taxes. Ptolemy III then sent an envoy to Jerusalem with instructions to demand immediate payment of the twenty talents of silver, and threatened, in case of further refusal, to punish the people of Jerusalem by banishing them from their country and putting Greek settlers there instead. The Judean capital split into two camps on this momentous issue; the loyalists disapproved of the High Priest's action in joining with the Syrians and their representative, the High Priest's young nephew, Joseph-ben-Tobias, went

to Alexandria to calm the anger of Ptolemy. By means of rich gifts and flattery he succeeded in winning the king's favor and convincing him of the loyalty of his Hebrew subjects. Ptolemy appointed Joseph his chief tax-collector in Palestine, giving him a detachment of troops, two thousand strong, for protection. For twenty-two years Joseph managed the affairs of Judea and the adjacent countries; he performed his duties faithfully, enriching the Egyptian treasury and himself at the same time, and as representative of the King, he exerted great influence over the administrative councils of Judea. Greek customs were introduced amongst the Hebrews, and the wealthy members of the community began to imitate the Greek mode of life, spending their time in luxurious idleness and drifting farther and farther away from their simple Hebrew ways.

Hostility against the Hebrew people first manifested itself during the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 B. C.), when the Syrians again made an attempt to reconquer Judea. Their king, Antiochus the Great, had already taken Galilee and the lands east of the Jordan, but Ptolemy went out in defence of his territories and defeated the Syrians near Raphia, taking away from them all they had conquered. (217 B. C.) The Hebrew people sent envoys to congratulate the Egyptian King upon his

victory, and he then expressed his desire to visit Jersusalem and make an offering in the temple. From the outer chamber Ptolemy insisted upon penetrating into the inner one, the Holy of Holies, which, according to the law, none but priests were permitted to do. Neither the entreaties of the priests nor the protests of the multitudes of worshippers present could induce the rash king to abandon his purpose. But no sooner, says the legend, had he crossed the threshold of the sacred chamber than his legs gave way beneath him and he fell senseless to the ground. He had to be carried out of the temple and from that day, he hated the Hebrews and their religion.

Upon his return to Egypt, Ptolemy IV issued a decree that whoever would not participate in heathen worship according to the Greek rites, could no longer enjoy any share in civil rights, and as a result of this, the Hebrews of Egypt found themselves deprived of their citizenship and in a profoundly humiliating situation. Not satisfied with this act of oppression, the king persecuted with the greatest cruelty all Hebrews who refused to observe the heathen religions then in vogue and one day ordered a crowd of them to be taken to a city square where wild elephants were turned loose upon them. But when the poor Hebrews saw the enraged mammoths being driven towards them, they set up

such a shout of horror, that the animals took fright and turned back, crushing their drivers and many of the spectators to death. The legend adds that this event made such an impression upon Ptolemy that he soon ceased to persecute the Hebrews altogether.

§ 6.

Simon the Just and Joshua-ben-Sirach.

At that time there lived in Jerusalem the High Priest, Simon the Just, successor of the Onias II mentioned above. In the contemporary legend, he is proclaimed the greatest of the High Priests, and it describes his participation in the activities of the Great Council during the last years of its existence. Very few of the High Priests took as much interest in the welfare of their people as Simon; not only was he their spiritual leader but their wise temporal leader as well. Thanks to his untiring energy, Jerusalem was powerfully fortified for defense against enemies; the damaged portions of the temple were repaired and an aqueduct constructed which conveyed water from suburban springs to the city through canals under the ground. As the people's spiritual head, Simon tried to strengthen their morals and their religion in every possible way; one of his sayings, quoted in ancient literature, was

that "The world rests upon three things; the word of God, service to God and good deeds," by which he meant, knowledge, faith and virtue.

The Hebrew sage, Joshua-ben-Sirach, a contemporary of Simon the Just, celebrates this High Priest's glory with great enthusiasm. The pious Joshua beheld with deep grief the adoption of the corrupt Greek customs by the Hebrews and the weakening of their pure faith and morality under the influence of Hellenic paganism. For the instruction of his co-religionists, he wrote his remarkable "Proverbs of Joshua, the Son of Sirach," which forms part of the supplementary portion of the Bible, called the Apocrypha. In this book, written after the manner of the "Proverbs of Solomon," Joshua sets forth wise rules for the solution of the various problems of human life, demonstrating the ruinous effects of luxury and vanity, and showing how only modesty, purity and industry can bring peace and happiness to men. He shows how learning is the source of the greatest good and begs his people to look back for their examples to the lives of the great kings, heroes and sages of their glorious past. The precepts of Joshua-ben-Sirach show a definite reaction against the influence of "Hellenic wisdom," which in all its aspects was so fundamentally the reverse of all that Judaism held as the truth in religion and life. Thus, in refutation of the

Greek philosophy of fatalism, Joseph expounds his doctrine of free-will, maintaining the individual's responsibility for his actions. "Do not say," he says, "I sinned because God made me sin. For in the beginning God created man, but afterwards He left him to follow his own dévices. Fire and water are within your reach; you may stretch forth your arm towards whichever one you choose. Thus both life and death are within the grasp of every man and whichever he desire, that shall be given him." He adjures parents to be strict with their children, to accustom them early in life both to work and to responsibility, instead of to amusements and gaiety after the fashion of the Greeks. Moderation in pleasure, care of health and serenity of mind are his recipe for a happy life. This book of Joshua's, written in Hebrew, was later translated into Greek and in that language only it has survived, for the original was lost.

§ 7.

The First Years of Syrian Domination.

When Ptolemy IV died, the Syrian king, Antiochus the Great, made another attempt to recover Judea from the Egyptians and this time he was successful. The Hebrews, incensed at Ptolemy's cruelty towards them, supported the rival sovereign and supplied his army with

food on its way to Egypt. They drove the Egyptian garrison out of Jerusalem and greatly facilitated the Syrian's victory. After a long war, Judea became a province of Syria and passed under the domination of the Seleucides (201 B. C.). Antiochus the Great treated the Hebrews very well; he allowed them to govern themselves under the leadership of their High Priest and the Council of Elders. He decreased their taxes and sanctioned the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem which had been broken down in many places during the late war, and further assigned a certain sum of money yearly out of the state treasury to subsidize the temple in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, Antiochus soon declared war upon the mighty Roman Republic and suffered a crushing defeat. Peace was concluded on condition that Antiochus paid the Romans an enormous indemnity, and finding himself short of money, he decided to confiscate the treasures of one of the heathen temples in the city of Elemais in Mesopotamia. This act of sacrilege so aroused the fury of the citizens that they slew the king and all his retinue. Antiochus' elder son, Seleucus IV, occupied the throne of Syria from 187 to 175 B. C. Onias II was then the High Priest in Jerusalem, a man of great piety, who tried to enforce the observance of the laws of the Hebrew religion and prevent the imitation of the

heathen customs of the Greeks. He even banished from the capital one of the supervisors of the temple, one Simon, a professed admirer of Hellenic manners, together with all his friends and followers. The exiles swore to avenge themselves upon Onias, and Simon went before the king and told him that the temple of Jerusalem was the repository of untold treasures which might be useful to a king in need of money. Seleucus IV was very short of money indeed at that time, and immediately sent his treasurer, Heliodorus, to Jerusalem with instructions to seize all the treasures the temple contained. In vain did the High Priest, Onias, try to convince Heliodorus that the treasury was far from well filled and that the money in it belonged chiefly to widows and orphans who had entrusted it to him for safe-keeping; the king's officer persisted, saying that he was under orders and had to obey his royal master. But just as he was about to carry out his intention, a miracle occurred to frustrate him.

Rumors spread among the people that Heliodorus, crossing the threshold of the sacred chamber, suddenly beheld a tall horseman with two youths of wondrous beauty on either side of him. The horse trampled upon Heliodorus, striking him with its hoofs, and the youths lashed the godless heathen with whips. Half dead with fright, Heliodorus left the temple, and shortly

afterward departed for Syria. In the meantime the traitor, Simon, had reported to Seleucus that the High Priest was to blame for Heliodorus' failure to seize the treasures. Fearing the royal anger, Onias went to Antioch, the capital of Syria, to justify himself before the King, but on the way there he learned that Seleucus had died suddenly, and had been succeeded by his younger brother, Antiochus V.

§ 8.

Jason and Menelaus.

At that period, strife between the various factions in Judea was spreading with great rapidity. The proximity of the Syrian Greeks, great numbers of whom lived in Palestine, brought about fundamental changes in the old customs and habits of the Hebrews. Many of them, especially those belonging to the upper classes, were attracted by the Grecian mode of life, by their mundanity and looseness of morals, by their theatres and public recreations, and renounced their own national customs in favor of those of the heathens. The life of the Hellenes of the ancient world, the original inhabitants of Greece, had its good as well as its evil aspects, as for example, their love for civic liberty and for the arts and sciences. These finer aspects, however, were but little in evi-

dence among the Greeks of Syria at the time of the Seleucides; on the contrary. They were notable chiefly for the crudity of their pagan beliefs, their lax morality, their ceaseless pursuit of pleasure and passion for luxury, to all of which the spirit of Judaism was most bitterly opposed. The laws of Moses enjoined upon the Hebrews a modest life as the best safeguard for purity of conduct; they warned the people to abstain from luxury and the pursuit of pleasure and to worship the incorporeal, the one God, Creator of the visible universe, and never to bow before idols made to represent the forces of nature. Thus, the Hebrews who imitated Greek customs and habits became apostates and traitors to their faith and nation. They were called "Hellenists," that is, admirers of all things Greek; their opponents were the true believers called "Assideans" or "pious ones,"¹ unwavering adherents to the Hebrew faith and obeying all its laws implicitly. They avoided even the slightest contact with the heathens and sternly opposed all forms of secular education which they called "the Greek wisdom." The Assideans swung to the opposite extreme from the Hellenists, and denied even what was fine and admirable in Hellenism, in their bigoted avoidance of the aliens. Their leader was the High Priest Onias III, and his brother, Joshua, was the head of the "Hellenists," having even

changed his name to "Jason" in order to be still more thoroughly Greek. Joshua planned to deprive his brother of his priestly office and introduce the new Hellenism into Judea. At that time the Syrian throne was occupied by Antiochus IV Epiphanus, a cruel tyrant who tried to force the adoption of Greek customs upon all the diverse nationalities over which he ruled. It was to this heathen and obdurate enemy of the Hebrews that Jason addressed himself with the offer of a large sum of money in exchange for the king's appointment of himself as High Priest of Jerusalem in his brother's stead. Antiochus was only too ready to comply with this request and dismissed Onias from office, so that Jason became the High Priest. (174 B. C.) He lost no time in introducing his so-called reforms into the country; he altered the educational system to conform with Greek ideas; he founded a "gymnasium" in Jerusalem where young men spent all their time in athletic pastimes and exercises instead of in the pursuit of knowledge. Even the priests would often leave off their services in the temple in order to participate in these recreations, and when the Olympic games were being held in Tyre, in the presence of the king, Jason sent his envoys there with a considerable sum of money to be spent for a sacrifice to the Greek demigod, Hercules.

The new High Priest did not enjoy his power very long, however. There lived at that time in Jerusalem a very shrewd and ambitious man named Menelaus, who belonged to the party of the "extreme Hellenists." One day Jason entrusted this man with the yearly tribute to Antiochus, and seizing the opportunity of an audience with the king, Menelaus, by flattery and cunning, contrived to win Antiochus' favor. He persuaded the king to appoint him High Priest, promising to pay a larger tribute than Jason, and Antiochus was perfectly willing to give him Jason's office on those terms. So Jason was deposed and Menelaus became the head of the temple. In order to furnish the huge tribute he had promised to pay, the traitorous High Priest stole many precious vessels from the temple and carried them off to Antioch. There he met Onias, who accused him roundly of misappropriating the treasures of the temple to his own personal uses. Thereupon Menelaus added another crime to those he had already committed; he sent one of his Greek friends to Onias, who lured the old man to an unfrequented spot, where he put him foully to death. The news of Menelaus' fresh act of villainy aroused great indignation among the people of Jerusalem and an enraged crowd killed his brother, Lysimachus, as a reprisal for their priest. They sent representatives to carry their

complaints against Menelaus before Antiochus, but the heartless tyrant had the messengers executed instead of listening to what they had come to tell him.

Shortly afterwards, Antiochus declared war upon Egypt. False rumors spread throughout Jerusalem that the king had been killed in battle and the people were overjoyed. With Jason at their head they rose against Menelaus and slew many of his followers, but Menelaus took refuge in the fortress of the capital under the protection of Syrian warriors. When Antiochus learned of the rebellion of the Hebrews, he hastened away from Egypt and arrived in Judea with a large army to put down the uprising. The infuriated king entered Jerusalem, sacked the temple, killed several thousand people and banished many others to foreign parts to be sold into slavery. (169 B. C.) Jason fled to the land of the Ammonites and Menelaus was reinstated as the High Priest.

§ 9.

Antiochus' Evil Reign.

Having suppressed the rebellion in Jerusalem, Antiochus Epiphanus began to persecute the Hebrews more cruelly than ever. He hated not only the people, but their religion and their moral code as well. He realized that so long as they continued to observe their laws and adhere to their national customs, they would retain their identity and never become one with the Greeks. Therefore he decided to force them to become heathens and merge with them whether they wished to or no. He issued an edict compelling all Hebrews to worship the gods of the Greeks and ordered them instantly to cease the observance of their own religion. Statues of heathen gods and altars to the same were placed everywhere in Judea, and upon these altars, animals, particularly swine, which the law of Moses considered "unclean," were regularly offered up. The Hebrews were forbidden, under pain of death, to celebrate their Sabbath or any of the solemn holidays, or to observe their dietary laws or foregather in the synagogues for the purpose of worshipping their God. The scrolls of the Holy Scriptures were defiled and covered over with pictures of the heathen gods, when they were not totally destroyed. A great

statue of Zeus, the chief of the Greek gods, was placed upon the sacred altar of the temple of Jerusalem, and services conducted in its honor on the twenty-fifth day of Kislev. (168 B. C.) Police guards patrolled the country from one end to the other, seeing that the king's orders were rigidly enforced. Many of the apostate Hellenists willingly obeyed Antiochus' impious decree and were rewarded with posts of honor and liberal gifts. But the majority of the people refused to betray their religion. The Assidians sought shelter among the neighboring tribes or hid in mountain passes of Judea or in caves. The more daring of them often left these shelters, and made their way secretly into towns and villages, trying to hearten the loyal people there by encouraging them in their faithfulness and doing their best to lead the hesitant ones in the right way.

Many glorious deeds of self-sacrifice for the sake of their religion and nation were performed in Judea at that time. Numbers of the Hebrews chose death to submission to the revolting requirements of the Syrian tyrant. One good old man named Eleasar, whom the Syrians tried to force to eat a piece of meat from an animal that had been sacrificed to some heathen god, stubbornly refused to touch it though threatened with all kinds of torture if he did not obey. They could not shake his decision, however, and liter-

ally tortured him to death. Another legend tells how a mother and her seven sons were imprisoned for refusing to renounce their faith. The Syrians bade them declare themselves ready to embrace the Greek religion and observe the heathen rites, and when they refused they were beaten with whips and clubs as the king had ordered. But all to no purpose, for neither the mother nor her sons would turn traitor to Judaism. Then the king demanded that they eat the flesh of a pig, and the eldest son cried: "We would sooner choke to death than break the laws of our forefathers." In great anger, the king then ordered the rash youth's tongue to be cut out and his arms and legs cut off, after which he was cast into a seething caldron while his mother and brothers looked on. But they remained undaunted; one after another they refused to do as Antiochus ordered them and were all subjected to the most atrocious torture and finally executed. When six of the brothers had thus been put to death and the turn of the seventh came round, the king addressed the mother, saying: "Tell this youngest son of yours at least to obey me, and save his life." But the heroic mother turned to her last child and said, "Have no fear of this wicked man, but die without protest for our God and our faith." So the boy was executed like the rest and the mother also.

These atrocities of the Syrians lasted more than six months, and it seemed as though the Hebrews were to be completely annihilated by their powerful and cruel enemies. But just as their sufferings became almost more than even the most enduring of them could bear, there appeared in their midst a band of brave men who decided to fight openly against the oppressors and free the people from their bondage and misery.

CHAPTER II

THE ASMONEAN WARS FOR FREEDOM— 167—140 B. C.

§ 10.

Mattathias Asmoneus.



ON a little mountain town called Modin, near Jerusalem, there lived an aged Hebrew priest named Mattathias, a member of the Asmonean family. He had five sons, Johannan, Simon, Judas, Eleazar and Jonathan, and the whole family was well known for its great piety and ardent patriotism. One day Syrian officials appeared in Modin to carry out Antiochus' decree that all Hebrews should adopt his own heathen religion. The king's officers raised an altar in the town to the pagan gods and summoned the people to worship before it. Some of them, lacking either faith or courage, did as they were commanded and repudiated their own religion, but others were not to be moved from their loyalty to Judaism. Seeing themselves thus only partially successful, the officials went to Mattathias, the most respectful man in Modin, and

tried to persuade him to take part in the heathen rituals, pointing out that the state religion, which was that of the Grecians, had been made compulsory for all subjects of the Syrian empire, and that the law applied to natives and aliens without distinction. But Mattathias proudly answered: "Let all the nations of the king's subject provinces obey him if they choose, even to the extent of betraying the religion of their ancestors. We shall not leave the path of our religion to go either to the right or to the left." And on another occasion when Mattathias came across one of the Hebrew apostates walking across the city square to approach the heathen altar with an offering, his anger so overwhelmed him that he pursued the false Hebrew and killed him then and there. Afterwards he and his sons, with a small band of religious zealots, took up arms against Apelles, the king's chief official, and after slaying him, tore down the heathen altar in Modin. (167 B. C.) Then Mattathias took up his war-cry: "Whoever is for God and His holy law, let him follow me," and the summons was answered by all the loyal Assideans. Unable to fight the enemy openly, they hid in mountain passes and whenever circumstances were at all favorable they made sudden and repeated attacks upon the Syrians, forcing their way into cities and villages where they put the Hebrew apostates

to death and destroyed the heathen temples and altars. The Assideans and their followers met in the synagogues and sought inspiration in their readings in the Torah and the Books of the Prophets. When they met small bands of Greeks on the road they slew them, but would not fight against odds, and rather than risk an encounter with bands more numerous than themselves they would flee in haste to the shelter of their inaccessible mountains.

The aged leader, Mattathias, died soon after his heroic exploit against Apelles, but before his death he exhorted his sons to continue the holy struggle against the enemies of their country and their religion. His most distinguished son was Judas, or Jehudah, surnamed Maccabaeus, or the Hammer, on account of his warlike spirit. He longed for nothing so much as to free the Hebrews from the alien yoke and became the leader of the valiant rebel warriors. Then he came out openly against the Syrians. When Apollonius, the Syrian governor of Palestine, learned of the rebellion, he left Samaria with a considerable army to put down the insurrection, but Judas met him with his army and inflicted a severe defeat upon him. Apollonius was killed in the fight and Judas took his sword which he fastened to his own belt and carried ever afterwards into all his battles, his first trophy of war, so that the

hand of the Hebrew thereafter struck with the weapon of the Greek. Judas gained another victory near Beth-Horon where the Hebrew warriors fought like raging lions. These two initial successes aroused the enthusiasm of the people and instilled fresh courage into them, and the rebellion against Antiochus spread over the whole of Judea.

§ 11.

The Victories of Judas Maccabaeus.

When reports of the rebellion in Judea reached King Antiochus, his fury knew no bounds. He sent a huge army into the country of the Hebrews with orders to raze the capital to the ground, exterminate or banish the people and colonize the land with other nationalities. Two famous generals, Nicanor and Gorgias, led the Syrian army into Judea. The invaders were so certain of victory that they even invited rich merchants to their camp, expecting to sell all their Hebrew prisoners as slaves. Great was the consternation when the news of the formidable invasion reached Judea; the people gathered in Mizpah, where Judas and his army were garrisoned. They held solemn services at which the people fervently invoked the help of the Lord, and Judas tried to inspire his men with courage for their high

task of defending their country and faith. All who showed signs of timidity and hesitation he dismissed from the army and left himself with a paltry six thousand to pit against the enemy legions. But his ardent faith and the consciousness that he was fighting for a just cause gave to each Hebrew warrior the strength of ten.

The Syrian leaders divided their army into two parts, intending to surround the Hebrews and exterminate them at a single blow. But Judas Maccabaeus found out their intention and made a rapid detour which brought his army out on the vanguard of the enemy forces. Shouting: "The Lord is with us," the Hebrews attacked the Syrians and routed them completely just outside the city of Emmaus. When the second section of the enemy's army, commanded by Gorgias, appeared on the scene and saw its vanguard defeated, the leader and his men beat a hasty retreat, leaving the Hebrews masters of the situation. (166 B. C.) Judas captured the entire enemy camp and a great deal of booty in the form of ammunitions and money which the slave-dealers had brought for the purchase of the Hebrew prisoners. The Hebrews were jubilant at their heroes' extraordinary success, and the victory brought so many new volunteers flocking to join Judas' army that when Lysias, the chief military leader of Syria, arrived at the head of another invading army, sixty thou-

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sand strong, Judas met him with ten thousand well-armed and picked men, eager for the fray. The Hebrews dauntlessly opened the attack on the enemy near Beth-Zur, south of Jerusalem, and once more the Syrians were defeated. (165 B. C.) Lysias was compelled to return to Antioch, consoling himself with the hope of raising another army in the near future with which he would put an end to rebellions in Judea once and for all.

§ 12.

Chanuka.

Their early victories paved the Maccabeans' way towards Jerusalem, and Judas and his band of heroes encountered no serious obstacle to their occupation of the capital and the temple hill. Only the citadel of Acra where Syrian soldiers were garrisoned then remained in the hands of the enemy, and leaving a well-armed detachment of his men to see that none of the Syrians escaped from the fortress, Judas set to work, unmolested, to restore the holy places of Jerusalem. As he climbed the Temple Hill with his warriors, a scene of ruin and desolation met their eyes. They found the temple all but destroyed, having been ransacked by the invaders; the main altar, desecrated with idol-worship, the gates burned down, the inner chambers wrecked

and the courtyards overgrown with weeds. Strong men though they were, not Judas nor any of his followers could restrain their tears, remembering the former beauty and splendour that lay in ruins before them. But it was no time to mourn the past; the future was waiting to be built. They immediately began to clear away the debris and restore the temple. The altar to Zeus, built over the old altar of Jehovah, was torn away and its stones removed to an "unclean place"; then the sacred Hebrew altar underneath was pulled down and the stones heaped up in a place apart "until some prophet should appear and decide what should be done with them." The sacred vessels had all been stolen, but new ones were made out of the gold and silver the Hebrew warriors had brought home from the wars.

When both the outer and inner chambers of the temple were once more in order, the ceremonies of consecration were begun. On the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kislev, exactly three years since the worship of Zeus first defiled the building, solemn services were held and offerings made to the God of Israel. The rehabilitation of the holy temple was celebrated for eight days and the antechambers were brightly illuminated every evening. The legend adds that Judas and his men had found only one small vessel containing sacred oil in one

of the chambers of the temple, but that a miracle of God caused this to burn in the temple lamps for eight whole days without going out. In other cities of Judea the people also illuminated their houses to celebrate the joyful restoration of their holy places, and it was decided that those eight days every year should be kept as days of rejoicing, to commemorate the deliverance of the Hebrews from the heathen yoke. This holiday, kept to the present day by Hebrews all over the world, is called Chanuka, that is, "The feast of consecration," and each evening little oil lamps or tapers are lit in all Jewish homes.

§ 11.

The Death of Antiochus, and the Truce.

Soon after the restoration of the temple, Antiochus Epiphanus, the cruel oppressor of the Hebrew people, died during an attack of insanity and in terrible agony. (164 B. C.) The Hebrews, who hated him with all their hearts, changed his surname Epiphanus (the magnificent) into Epimachus (the insane). Antiochus V, surnamed Eupator, a son of the dead king, succeeded to the Syrian throne, but as he was a minor, the country was ruled in his name by the chief Syrian statesmen. One of these, the general Lysias, began to make preparations for

a fresh campaign against Judea and had the young king accompany him into the invaded country at the head of an army of one hundred thousand men. The Syrians also took with them thirty-two huge elephants, trained for war. The Syrian and Judean armies again met near the fortified city of Beth-Zur, and the Hebrews fought them with the utmost bravery. But they were hopelessly outnumbered, and at last Eleazar, one of Judas' brothers, resorted to a desperate venture in order, as he hoped, to end the struggle. He saw an enormous and richly caparisoned elephant with a young warrior upon its back, and mistaking the rider for the king, he fought his way through the Syrian ranks and killed the elephant with his sword; he did not, however, succeed in killing its rider. The great animal fell heavily to the ground and its immense weight crushed the daring Eleazar to death. Heroic exploits by individuals only, could not, however, give the Hebrews the victory. Beth-Zur was forced to surrender and the Judean army retreated towards Jerusalem. The Syrians soon reached the walls of Zion and besieged the fortress on Temple Hill. The beleaguered people were in a desperate plight, lacking food, for it was a sabbatical year and the fields of Judea were not under cultivation, and the stores of grain in the land were very scanty.

It seemed as though the impending destruction of Zion was about to undo all the good the rebellion had done and bring Judea once more under the Syrians' heel. It happened otherwise however. Lysias, with victory apparently already within his grasp, suddenly received word of great disturbances in Antioch, where another Syrian general was trying to seize the reins of government for himself. Lysias concluded a hasty peace with the Hebrews on very favourable terms, and left for Syria. (163 B. C.) According to the treaty, the Hebrews were granted self-government, freedom of religion, the right to observe their own laws and customs without molestation, on the sole condition that they recognized the supremacy of Syria and in token of their submission and peaceable intentions, they were to demolish the fortifications on Temple Hill. The traitor Menelaus, whom Antiochus-Epiphanus had made the High Priest and who had remained in the Syrian camp, was dismissed from office. Shortly afterwards, says the chronicler, Menelaus lost the king's favor and was executed by order of Antiochus V or of the general Lysias. His death greatly weakened the power of the Hellenist party in Judea.

The Asmoneans' heroic struggle, which lasted five years, achieved the abolition of all Antiochus-Epiphanus' decrees against Judaism and

the restoration of the old order which had existed before the epoch of persecutions.

§ 14.

Alcimus. Death of Judas Maccabaeus.

Meanwhile a revolution was taking place in Antioch. Demetrius Soter, the brother of Antiochus Epiphanus, having gained the support of a certain section of the people, killed Lysias and his own nephew, Antioch Eupator, and declared himself king. (161 B. C.) The new king repudiated the liberties his predecessor had granted to the Hebrews and prepared to make war upon them. The Hellenist party in Judea, temporarily weakened, revived again and the priest Alcimus, or Eliakim, leader of the moderates, was appointed High Priest by King Demetrius. But the Assideans and those who had fought for liberty with Judas Maccabaeus refused to recognize Alcimus and would not allow him into Jerusalem. The king then sent to his assistance a detachment of Syrian troops under the leadership of Bacchides. Alcimus arrived at the capital and promised the people that he would act according to the spirit of the patriotic Assideans, but no sooner had they admitted him, believing his promises, than he began to show himself in his true colors, first by persecuting the Assideans, of whom sixty were

executed by his orders. Having obtained the office of High Priest with the help of the Syrians, the perfidious Alcimus then suggested to the king the necessity of curbing the rebellious Assideans and Judas, their leader and the king sent his general, Nicanor, to Judea, who boasted that he would very soon burn the temple of Jerusalem to the ground. On the thirteenth day of Adar, (March, 161 B. C.) a battle took place near the village of Adarso, where the Hebrews again won a brilliant victory. Nicanor fell on the battlefield and his men fled in disorder. The victors cut off the leader's head and hung it up near the gates of Jerusalem. The day of this success, which was the eve of Purim, was celebrated in Judea for a long time afterwards as "Nicanor's day."

But the Hebrews' valiant leader did not live long after his defeat of Nicanor. When the king heard of his army's failure to subdue the Hebrews, he sent twenty thousand men under Bacchides to Judea, and by a series of forced marches they reached Jerusalem in a very short time. They found Judas unprepared to meet them, not having expected so rapid a reprisal. He was able to muster only three thousand men, most of whom feared to attack the enemy openly. They insisted that it would be better to retreat in order to reinforce their numbers first, but Judas, their intrepid chief, would

not even hear of so disgraceful a proposal. "If our time has come to die," he said to them, "let us die bravely for our brethren, but not stain our honor." Of his whole army, only eight hundred of his most devoted followers were willing to follow him, and with that handful of heroes he attacked the enemy near Adarsa. The small but courageous band fought desperately, but their ranks grew rapidly thinner and thinner, until at last the great leader himself fell on the field with his sword still grasped in his hand. (160 B. C.) Judas' brothers found his body which they carried to Modin and buried in the Asmonean family vault.

§ 15.

Jonathan Asmoneus.

After the death of Judas Maccabaeus, the Judean army elected his brother Jonathan as their leader. (159 B. C.) Jonathan was not so valiant a fighter as his brother Judas; he possessed the statesman's talents rather, and knew how to turn every opportunity to account in furthering the liberation of his country. While the Syrian governor Bacchides, and the High Priest Alcimus continued to rule over Jerusalem, he knew he could do nothing, and so he roamed about in the wilderness near the Dead Sea, with his followers, waiting. Alcimus died

suddenly, just as he was beginning to rebuild the inner wall of the temple, and the people believed his end was a punishment from God for all the evil he had done during his lifetime. The Hellenists thus lost their leader, and Jonathan took advantage of their weakness to strengthen his own party. Having mustered a considerable army, he began with his brother Simon to harass the Syrian with repeated attacks. Tired of these skirmishes, Bacchides soon refused to bother himself any longer with the struggle of the Hebrew parties; he made peace with Judea and went back to Syria in 157 B. C. and for several years Judea enjoyed peace under the rule of Jonathan.

The position of the country was considerably strengthened by events in Syria where a struggle for the throne was in fierce progress. A native of Rhodes, one Alexander Balas, who claimed to be a son of Antiochus Epiphanus and the lawful heir to the throne, had risen against Demetrius. Alexander proclaimed himself king and, supported by a large army, declared war upon Demetrius, who, in dismay, begged Jonathan's assistance in ridding himself of his rival, promising Judea various privileges in return. But Alexander, on his side, was also trying to win the support of the Hebrew ruler; he made Jonathan the High Priest, that is, chief over all the Hebrew people, and

presented him with a cloak of purple and a golden crown. The Hebrews, who had not yet forgotten Demetrius' many acts of cruelty, joined Alexander against him and after a long struggle the pretender seized the throne of Syria. Jonathan entered Jerusalem and during the autumn holidays held the first solemn services in the temple in his capacity of High Priest. (152 B. C.) Thus the family of Asmoneans, who had stirred the people to revolt against Syria, ended by having one of its members chief of the Hebrew nation with the sanction of the Syrian government, and the succeeding kings of Syria were obliged to recognize the Asmoneans as the rightful hereditary rulers of Judea.

The incessant disturbances and the struggle for the Syrian throne had reduced the kingdom to such a state of feebleness that Jonathan decided that he might now successfully shake off the yoke under which Judea had so long bowed its neck. Concealing his intentions from the government, he increased his army by gradual degrees, fortified Jerusalem and other cities and prepared to achieve complete independence for his people. But his preparations were not lost on the Syrian general, Tryphon, and in order to frustrate the High Priest's plans in time, he lured Jonathan and a small band of his soldiers into the city of Ptolemais, or Accom,

where he ordered the latter to be slain and took Jonathan prisoner.

§ 16.

Simon Asmoneus.

Upon Jonathan's imprisonment, his brother Simon became the chief of the Judean army. (143 B. C.) Simon used all possible means to save the life of his brother whom Tryphon refused to release, but without avail. At first the Syrian promised to free Jonathan upon payment of a great ransom and certain hostages, but after having received both, the wily general nevertheless had Jonathan put to death and returned only their hero's corpse to the Hebrews.

Simon, the last of the Asmonean brothers, completed the task of freeing his country from the Syrians. With his powerful and well-equipped army, he gradually forced the remaining enemy garrisons out of the fortified towns of Judea, and finally the last bulwark of foreign rule fell when the Syrian detachments, stationed in the fortress of Ptolemais near Jerusalem, surrendered after a siege. The city was surrounded by Simon's troops, who cut off their food-supply and hunger compelled them after a long resistance to acknowledge their defeat. The proud fortress which had been

a standing menace to the freedom of Judea for many years was at last cleared of aliens and on the twenty-third day of Iyar, (May, 142 B. C.) the people of Jerusalem made a triumphant entry into Acra. This memorable day was proclaimed a national holiday for observance in the future.

The Syrian kings, considering further struggles with the Hebrews useless, decided to waive their claims to the tribute which Judea had been paying, and the land of Israel thus became an independent country. In the presence of a large assembly summoned to Jerusalem on the 18th day of Elul (August, 140 B. C.), Simon was elected High Priest and prince of the liberated nation. He ordered that special money be coined for Judea as befitted its independence, and silver and copper coins were accordingly struck, inscribed on the one side "The holy city of Jerusalem" or "Simon, Prince of Israel," and on the other "The year (so and so) of our liberation." Thus ended Judea's wars for freedom, having lasted twenty-seven years. They are known as the Asmonean Wars, after the family name of Mattathias and his sons, or as Maccabaeian wars, after the surname of their greatest hero, Judas Maccabaeus.

§ 17.

The Hebrews in Egypt.

While the struggle between the Asmoneans and the Syrians was still raging, the Hebrews in Egypt were living in peace and tranquility. Their numbers were greatly increased by the influx of immigrants from Judea fleeing from the brutal persecutions of Antioch Epiphanus, and King Ptolemy VI Philometor, the ruler of Egypt (181-145 B. C.), gladly admitted and protected the refugees. The Hebrew citizens of Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, acquired great importance at that time; they lived chiefly in a certain quarter of the city, called Delta, adjoining the harbor. The "Hebrew town" was a scene of sleepless activity, most of the people being engaged in commerce dealing with the export and import of various merchandise. As well as all civil rights, the Hebrews of Alexandria also held the privilege of communal self-government.

The head of the community was the "ethnarch," who "ruled the people, settled disputes and saw to the enforcements of ordinances, like the chief of an independent city." Alexandria boasted a magnificent synagogue so large that the voice of the priest could not be heard in its farthest corners, and in order that the wor-

shippers might know when to answer "amen" to the benedictions, a banner had to be raised as a signal in the middle of the building so that all might see it.

This splendid edifice failed, however, to satisfy the Egyptian Hebrews. They wished to have a great temple like the one in Jerusalem where they would be able not only to hold divine services but also to bring offerings according to the Biblical rites. Lacking such a temple in Alexandria, many pious Hebrews were forced to make the pilgrimage to the far city of Jerusalem for the holidays, a very difficult and perilous undertaking during the troublous period of the Asmonean wars. Onias IV, a son of Onias III, the High Priest who had been deposed by Antiochus Epiphanus, came to Egypt from Judea and considering himself the rightful heir to the office of High Priest, this Onias Junior (Onias was his Greek name), decided to build a separate temple for the Egyptian Hebrews. King Ptolemy gave his consent and a beautiful temple, built on the plan of the one in Jerusalem, was raised in Heliopolis. (160 B. C.) Services were conducted there by Onias and other priests and Levites whom the unrest in Judea had caused to seek refuge abroad. A special town, called Honion, in honor of Onias, was built near the temple to shelter the

refugee priests. The Hebrew temple in Egypt survived more than two centuries.

At that time the various Greek translations of the Scriptures were being widely read by the Greeks and Hebrews of Alexandria. The translation of the Bible into Greek, which had been started during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelph, made considerable progress during the reign of Ptolemy Philometor. The educated heathens became more and more familiar with the religious literature of the Hebrews, while the Alexandrian Hebrews were beginning to adopt the secular culture and learning of the Greeks, producing many poets and philosophers such as Aristobulos Eupolemus, Ezekiel and others, who all used the Greek language in their writings.

CHAPTER III

JUDEA UNDER THE ASMONEANS—140-37 B. C.

§ 18.

The Reign of Simon.



THE long wars and general turbulence in Judea at last gave place to a period of freedom and peace during which the country flourished under the rule of Hebrew princes. Simon, the first prince of the Asmonean dynasty, made heroic efforts to ameliorate the condition of the people by restoring the country to some sort of order, so that life and property at least might become safe once more and the prevailing lawlessness brought under control. The constant fighting had left the land devastated and barren, but Simon devoted all his energy to encouraging agriculture and commerce, and built a great commercial harbor in Jaffa, which city he had captured from the Syrians and which was the nearest port to Jerusalem. The Syrian king, Antiochus Sidetes, son of Demetrius I, observed with extreme disapproval the growing strength of

Judea. He sent envoys to Simon requesting him either to restore Jaffa and the fortress of Jerusalem to Syria, or to pay for them with an immense sum of money, about \$1,000,000. Upon the Hebrew prince's refusal to entertain either request, Antiochus dispatched his general, Cendebeus of Hyrcania, with a large army to invade Judea. Simon met the invaders with a powerful force led by his sons, Johannan and Judas, and a great battle took place near Jaffa in which the sons of Simon carried off the victory. (137 B. C.) In commemoration of their success, the elder, Johannan, was given the surname of Hyrcan. In order to protect himself against similar attacks in future, Simon concluded an alliance with Rome, Syria's arch-enemy, and the most powerful empire of that period.

Seeing himself unable to conquer Simon on the battlefield, Antiochus decided to use foul means where fair ones had failed, and destroy his foe by a ruse. He addressed himself to Simon's son-in-law, Ptolemy, the governor of the province of Jericho, with the suggestion that he kill the Asmonean and seize the throne for himself, and Ptolemy yielded to the temptation. He invited the prince with his family and all his retinue to pay him a visit at his castle near Jericho and made a great feast in their honor, and while they were all eating and drinking, the treacherous Ptolemy's slaves, acting on their

master's cruel orders, killed Simon, his two sons, Mattathias and Judas, and several of their attendants. (135 B. C.) Ptolemy then imprisoned his mother-in-law, Simon's wife, in the castle. Johannan Hyrcan, Simon's eldest son, and heir to the throne of Judea, lived in the city of Gazara and thither Ptolemy sent other slaves with instructions to put him also to death, but news of the plot reached Johannan in time for him to flee to Jerusalem where the people and the army proclaimed him king. The Hebrews mourned the untimely death of Simon Asmoneus, their murdered liberator, with deep sorrow and buried him in Modin, in his family tomb. Over his grave they set a magnificent monument high upon a rock where it could be seen far out to sea.

§ 19.

Johannan Hyrcan, 135-109 B. C.

Johannan Hyrcan's first care, upon his accession to the throne, was to punish his father's murderer, and he made several attempts to seize Ptolemy's castle of Dok, but on each occasion the regicide appeared on the castle wall with Johannan's mother, whom he had kept in prison ever since killing her husband, and threatened to slay her on the spot the moment Johannan began his attack. These threats and the news of

the King of Syria's approach, drove Johannan back to Jerusalem, and shortly after, Antiochus Sidetes in person led his great army into Judea and besieged the capital which was so well fortified, however, that it was impossible to take it by assault. The Syrians decided upon the alternative of maintaining the siege until the food supplies should give out when the citizens would be forced either to surrender or starve to death. At last Johannan concluded peace with the enemy, and the terms of the treaty provided for the payment of tribute to the Syrian King for Jaffa and other cities, as well as a guarantee to demolish the fortifications of Jerusalem. Then Antiochus left Judea.

The traitor, Ptolemy, forsaken by his allies the Syrians, fled the country but not before satisfying his passion for bloodshed by yet another crime, the murder of Hyrcan's mother.

After the death of Antiochus Sidetes, disturbances began anew in Syria, and Johannan Hyrcan profited by the disintegration of the kingdom to repudiate its sovereignty over Judea. He concentrated all his efforts on the attainment of one single purpose, which was to secure his borders against invasion, and to that end he decided to subjugate the petty border tribes which were in the habit of helping Judea's enemies in their depredations. He then set out with a numerous army which included a

great number of heathen mercenaries, and first conquered several cities east of the Jordan. This accomplished, he declared war against the Samaritans, the hereditary enemies of Judea, and destroyed Sechem, their holy city, and their temple on Mount Gerizim. He rounded off the expedition by a definitive conquest of the Edomites, and having razed their fortresses to the ground, he offered them the choice of either embracing the Hebrew faith or being expelled from their country for good. They chose the lesser evil and accepted Judaism, and in time became entirely merged with the Hebrews, though the intermingling of the two peoples was destined to lead to very sad consequences for the dynasty of the Asmoneans.

The Samaritans might accept the religion of Judea, but its political sovereignty never; once recovered from their latest defeat, they joined the Syrians and Egyptians in declaring war upon Hyrcan. But the allies were unsuccessful and after a twelve-months' siege, the fortified city of Samaria was totally destroyed by the Judean conquerors. Aristobulus and Antigonos, the two sons of Johannan, gained distinguished reputations in the course of this campaign.

Thus the boundaries of Judea were greatly extended and now enclosed an area almost as vast as that of the kingdom of David and Solo-

mon when Judea was at the height of its glory. From Jaffa, the chief port, it derived great revenues, and as for its military security, none of the neighboring tribes had the hardihood to renew their attacks upon such powerful fortresses as Judea now possessed, nor to try their strength against Hyrcan's well-trained and well-equipped army. With the kingdom's expansion, the capital grew in splendor, until once again, as in its distant past, Jerusalem became a place of beauty adorned with magnificent buildings, not the least of which was the royal palace that rose upon a height, east of Temple Hill and was connected with the temple by many bridges.

Having duly consolidated his kingdom's position, Johannan renewed his alliance with Rome and received formal recognition of Judea's rights to its recently acquired possessions.

§ 20.

The Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes.

When Judea, after many centuries of dependence, became at last, as in ancient times, a free kingdom, a question arose among the representatives of the people as to how, and in what spirit, the restored kingdom should be governed, and in what relations the state and the national religion, the temporal and the spiritual rulers, should stand towards each other. Some held

the opinion that the Hebrews should conduct their affairs as other nations did theirs, going out to fight for territorial expansion and using every possible means to strengthen the political power of Judea. Others were of a different mind, pointing out that the Hebrews were a race apart, with a different spiritual inheritance from the rest, and should therefore adhere to their peculiar religious laws which urged them to hold aloof from other nations and concern themselves exclusively with the improvement of conditions within their own frontiers. The people's conception of Judaism, i. e., the religion as embodied in the commandments, laws and customs which had come down to them from times of the remotest antiquity to the Asmonean period, had as many different and contradictory aspects as there were different strata of society. The Judeans of that era were divided into three distinct factions, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes.

The Pharisees were the successors of the Assideans or "pious ones." They held that the life of every individual Hebrew, as well as of the whole nation collectively, should be governed by the laws of the religion. The Pharisees observed with the utmost rigor not only all the written Biblical commandments, but all the rules and customs which had been handed down

by word of mouth as well. And in addition to these, their religious teachers established new laws which aimed to complete or improve upon the old ones, in order to make them applicable to new conditions of life. These ardent preceptors also expounded to the people such of the religious dogmas as were not stated with sufficient clarity in the Bible, in order that by understanding them better, they might be induced to observe them with more consistency. The Pharisees' laid especial stress upon one article of faith above all others: that God would reward every man after death according to his merits, for the soul of man does not die with his body but continues after his life in the world, to exist in some higher sphere where the souls of the virtuous enter into bliss while those of evildoers are committed to torments in expiation of the sins their possessors committed on earth. Such was the law of supreme justice which God had established, and He took the Hebrews for His chosen people and gave them His commandments of truth and virtue, thereby imposing upon them the most implicit obedience. The Hebrews should not imitate other nations, therefore, said the Pharisees, since they were themselves the world's example. On the contrary, they ought to live so as to distinguish their race from the others, shunning all contact with evil and taint of heathenism. The Phari-

sees were renowned for their deep devotion to their religion and for their virtuous conduct; they preached modesty and frugality and were kind to the poor and helpless. They had many religious teachers to their credit as well as famous exponents of the law, but on the other hand there were also among them many insincere ones whose goodness was all on the outside while their hearts were filled with wickedness within. These hypocrites were called by the people "the painted ones" (zebuim).

The Sadducees were the successors of the Hellenists. Their attitude towards the problem of government was the attitude of statesmen and men of the world; they were all for the separation of religious and temporal affairs. This was the party of the upper classes; military leaders, officials, priests and members of old and distinguished families. The Sadducees held that the nation owed absolute obedience only to the Biblical laws, and that all such rules as had been handed down verbally or adopted as mere popular customs during later periods, were of no importance. They rejected the belief in reward beyond the grave on the grounds that Moses made no specific promises to that effect. They adhered to the letter of the law rather than to its spirit and refused either to add anything to the Biblical laws or to detract anything from them, even though the

altered conditions of life demanded certain modifications. The Sadducees looked upon the Hebrew religion as a dead, not as a living, creed, something that was to be preserved and not developed. The Sadducees of the rich and influential classes allowed nothing to impede the freedom of their lives, and refused to admit that there could be anything sinful in associating with heathens. Sadducee priests often treated their Pharisee colleagues with marked enmity, and both factions, priests and laymen alike, struggled continuously to gain the upper hand in affairs of state.

The Essenes formed the third party. They held consistently aloof from public and political affairs, and concerned themselves only with attaining a state of perfection in their personal lives. They considered themselves a "holy" caste and strictly observed certain special laws of personal cleanliness which were compulsory only for priests. Most of them lived in the wilderness in small groups or communes, like monks, into which men only were admitted. The members of the Essene groups had all their possessions in common and lived like brothers together; agriculture was their principal occupation. They ate nothing but bread and vegetables and drank no wine. They bathed daily in lake or river to keep their bodies clean and wore only white garments. They were regarded

popularly as saints and miracle-workers; the sick often went to them to be cured of their diseases, and others to have their future foretold.

§ 21.

The Sanhedrin and the Struggle of the Parties.

Like his father Simon, Johannan Hyrcan held the joint office of temporal prince and of High Priest, but considerable power was also vested in the council of state called the Sanhedrin, which is the Greek word for "council." The Sanhedrin sat at Jerusalem, and consisted of seventy members besides the president. The sessions were held in one of the great chambers of the temple of Jerusalem and there the members discussed problems of state, passed laws and decided legal questions of importance. The prince never made any important decision in any matter of public concern without the approval of the Sanhedrin.

The Sanhedrin usually held open court and the public was admitted to the trials. The judges sat in a semi-circle so that each could see the others, and on either hand stood scribes who wrote down their findings. For the trial of any case, a quorum of not less than twenty-three members was necessary, called the Little Sanhedrin; and in criminal cases a majority of

only one vote was enough for acquittal, while a majority of at least two was necessary for conviction. The members of the council aimed at justice and mercy for all. The procedure in cross-examination began usually with the youngest members, followed by the others in order of seniority, and the presiding judge spoke last. The object of this order was that the younger members might otherwise be influenced in their opinions by their elders to whose superior wisdom they would naturally defer. Those in favor of acquittal spoke first, those for conviction last, and a vote once cast for acquittal might on no account be revoked. In this way, the death penalty was very seldom imposed in cases tried by the Sanhedrin.

At the beginning of Hyrcan's reign there were many highly influential Pharisees among the members of the Sanhedrin, and their presence in such numbers was furiously resented by the Sadducees. Hoping to obtain their expulsion from the council, the Sadducee members reported to Hyrcan that the Pharisees were in the habit of expressing dissatisfaction with his rule, and the prince, in order to prove the truth of this report, held a feast to which he invited many important guests. In the midst of the feast, Johannan rose and said: "If anyone here present can prove that I ever broke the law as prince or as High Priest, let him rise like a man

and tell me so." Then one Pharisee got up in his place and said: "Prince, if you would really act righteously, be satisfied with your princely crown and resign the office of High Priest, for your mother was once a prisoner of heathens."

These words deeply insulted Hyrcan, but he was just enough to order that the Pharisee's contention be verified by competent investigators; they reported that the Pharisee was wrong and Hyrcan then demanded his punishment by the Sanhedrin. The Pharisee members, however, dismissed the offender with a very light sentence, which confirmed the prince's suspicions against them, and he joined the rival faction, ousting Pharisees from their most important offices and replacing them by Sadducees, which aroused considerable dissatisfaction among the people. Johannan Hyrcan died in 104 B. C., having ruled over Judea for thirty years. He was survived by five sons, three of whom, Judas-Aristobolus, Antigonus and Alexander-Jannai lived to distinguish themselves in after years.

§ 22.

Judas-Aristobolus.

Before Hyrcan died he appointed his wife as ruler of the country and his eldest son, Judas (who also bore the Greek name of Aristobolus) as High Priest. But Aristobolus was not con-

tent with the ecclesiastical office only, and as soon as his father was dead, he threw his mother into prison, where, according to the legend, she starved to death, and seized the political power for himself. This ambitious man was not content either with the title of "prince," which all his predecessors had borne, but must call himself "king" (melech) and wear a royal crown upon his head, which was a thing no Asmonean had done before.

Aristobolus was a morbid and irritable person; he cared for only one of his brothers, Antigonus, whom he appointed chief of the Judean army, and cordially hated the other three whom he kept in prison throughout his reign. Antigonus conquered the north of Galilee and compelled its inhabitants, an Arab tribe called the Iturians, to embrace the Hebrew religion. His military exploits earned him great renown among the people, but aroused the envy of the members of the king's retinue, who conspired to create suspicion and distrust in their master's mind against his brother. Their efforts were not in vain.

Antigonus returned to Jerusalem at the time of the autumn holiday of Succoth, after a campaign in which he had covered himself with glory. At the head of his whole army he went to the temple to open the festivities and the populace welcomed him with wild rejoicing.

The sound of their acclamations carried to the palace, and the courtiers, who hated Antigonus, turned to the king and said: "Do you hear how the people are welcoming your brother? Soon he will seize the power for himself and obey you no longer." Others added that Antigonus would soon come to the palace fully armed and attempt to take possession of the throne. Aristobolus then ordered his guards to kill any armed man they saw attempting to enter the palace, and in the meantime he sent a messenger in haste to Antigonus advising him to come unarmed. But the courtiers intercepted the king's warning and bribed the messenger to tell Antigonus the very reverse of what Aristobolus had said. So Antigonus received his brother's supposed summons to the palace, telling him to appear in military apparel and fully armed as if for war, but no sooner did he approach the palace than the guards, obeying the king's orders, set upon him and slew him. The news of his favorite brother's death came as a terrible shock to Aristobolus; the sickness from which he had been suffering took a turn for the worse and he died shortly after, having reigned only one year, 103 B. C., and leaving no children behind him. The influence of the Sadducees had grown very powerful during his reign and he was called "Philhellene," i. e., the friend of Greece.

§ 23.

Alexander-Jannai.

After Aristobulus' death, his widow, Salome-Alexandra, freed his brothers from prison. The eldest, Alexander-Jannai, became king, and according to Biblical law, married the childless widow of the late king his brother. In his childhood, Alexander-Jannai had been disliked by his father, Johannan Hyrcan, who could not bear to see his son about the palace, and sent him away to Galilee to be educated. There he received good military training but failed to obtain the civil and spiritual education necessary for a future ruler and High Priest. Become head of the state through the premature death of his two brothers, the inadequacy of his training for this exalted position became sadly evident. The new king was more Greek than Hebrew in his tastes and inclinations; he had only one aim in life which was to extend the power of Judea over the whole of Palestine. As soon as he ascended the throne, he made an attempt to conquer Ptolemais, a seacoast city, thereby incurring an invasion by the Egyptians who were already laying plans to re-establish their dominion in Judea. Jannai succeeded only in capturing a few cities on the coast on one side, and on the banks of the Jordan on the other, (96 B. C.)

The people, tired of devastating wars, lent no approval to these new campaigns. The influential Pharisees had no respect for Jannai either as king or as High Priest, on account of his friendship for the aristocratic Sadducees, and a certain incident occurred which strained the relations between Jannai and the Pharisees to the breaking-point. During the autumn holidays the king, being also the High Priest, was conducting divine services in the temple of Jerusalem. He was handed a silver cup of water for the libations upon the altar, according to the popular custom adopted by the Pharisees; but the king, wishing to please the Sadducees who did not observe this custom, poured the water on the ground. The great congregation assembled in the temple were seized with such indignation at this action that they began to pelt Jannai with the fruits they had brought for offerings at the altar. The king ordered his heathen mercenaries to disperse the crowds and several thousands of Hebrews were killed in the courtyard of the temple. After this, the people's hatred of their king grew more and more bitter, and soon he returned from another unsuccessful expedition against the Arabs, to find Jerusalem on the verge of an uprising. The struggle of the people against the king lasted for six years. (94-88 B. C.) Alexander fought the rebels with the help of hired troops who

stopped at no cruelties. Nearly fifty thousand Hebrews perished during the period of this civil war, but when the king finally grew tired of fighting his own people and offered to make peace with the Pharisees, they replied: "Only your death can make peace between us." So implacable was the enmity of the people towards Jannai that they invited Syrian reinforcements into Judea and with their assistance, were at last victorious. Jannai was obliged to seek safety in flight and hid in the mountains, but he soon succeeded in taking a fortress where many Pharisees made a stand against him, and there he avenged himself upon them with the utmost cruelty. Eight hundred were crucified by his orders and many others fled to Syria and Egypt. The people named Jannai "the Thracian," which means "the savage."

Feeling the approach of death, Jannai repented of his countless cruelties. He made Queen Salome-Alexandra his successor and advised her to make peace with the Pharisees. "Fear neither the Pharisees nor the Sadducees," he told her, "fear only the 'painted ones' who are wicked behind their pretended righteousness." Then he died, having reigned for twenty-seven years (104-76 B. C.), and was survived by his widow and two sons.

§ 24.

Salome-Alexandra.

The reins of government were taken over by Queen Salome-Alexandra, who appointed her elder son, Hyrcan, a weak and simple-minded man, High Priest. But her younger son, Aristobulus, ambitious and high-spirited, was kept away from the court and out of all affairs of state. Salome-Alexandra was a very careful and sagacious ruler who did her best to repair the damage done to the country during her husband's turbulent reign. During the ten years of her rule (76-67 B. C.), Judea remained almost immune from invasion. She recalled the Pharisees and restored their political status; all of them who had fled to foreign lands during the reign of Alexander-Jannai returned to their own country, among them the leaders of the party, a brother of Salome's, Simon-ben-Shetah, and a certain scholar named Judah-ben-Tabbai. Both these men had lived in exile during the reign of the cruel Jannai, Simon wandering from one country to another and Judah hiding in Egypt. After the death of her husband, the queen brought her brother back to Jerusalem and he persuaded his friend Judah to return from Egypt. They became the presidents of the Sanhedrin and the influence of the Pharisees in matters of state again became very powerful.

They took the greatest care to restore law and order in the disorganized country and the people said of Simon that "he restored the law to its ancient bounds." He compelled parents to send their children to school and in his endeavor to protect the rights of women, Simon passed a law by which every man, before his marriage, was to sign a written document entitling his wife to part of his property in case of death or divorce (*kethuba*). Rigorous criminal laws introduced by the Sadducees during the preceding reign, were replaced by more lenient ones. Most of the Sadducees were dismissed from their offices in the legislative and judicial bodies and allowed to retain only their high posts in the army.

The Sadducees had, however, a strong protector in Aristobulus, the queen's second son, and when Salome fell suddenly ill, the young man secretly left Jerusalem and assisted by the Sadducee generals, attempt to seize the throne. He was supported further by many regiments of the army and the citizens of several fortified cities where Sadducees held the power. Then Salome-Alexandra died and a sanguinary struggle for the throne began in Judea.

§ 25.

The Struggle Between Hyrcan II and Aristobulus II.

Upon the queen's death, her elder son, the High Priest Hyrcan II, was expected to succeed her, but no sooner was he proclaimed king than his brother, Aristobulus, proceeded towards Jerusalem with an army, prepared to fight for the throne unless it was peacefully surrendered to him. Hyrcan sent his own troops out to meet the aggressors, and a fierce encounter took place near Jericho. Hyrcan's army was badly defeated, chiefly on account of the wholesale desertion of his soldiers, whose admiration for Aristobulus's courage overcame their loyalty and sent them over to the other side. (67 B. C.) Hyrcan, filled with consternation, sought refuge in fortress of the temple in Jerusalem, and when Aristobulus entered the capital he voluntarily acknowledged himself vanquished. The brothers then made peace and under the terms of their treaty Hyrcan was to abdicate the throne, retaining only the post of High Priest, and Aristobulus was to be proclaimed King of Judea in his stead. Thereupon, in the presence of a vast multitude of people, the brothers shook hands and embraced one another. Hyrcan was not extremely loth to relinquish the throne, for his personal inclinations were rather

for peace and calm than for glory, and he knew he was unsuited by temperament to govern a kingdom.

The reign of Aristobulus in Judea did not remain peaceful very long. Civil war broke out again as a result of the intrigues of one Antipater, a descendant of the Edomites who many years before, had been subjugated by Johannan-Hyrcau and brought under the standard of Judaism. Antipater was the chief of the army in the province of Edom and Hyrcan II's friend. Before the death of Queen Salome, while Hyrcan was only the heir-apparent to the throne, this ambitious Edomite had counted on the young man's weakness of character to make him his chief-counsellor when he should become king. His hopes vanished however when the power passed into the hands of Aristobulus. Antipater could not endure his disappointment and did all he could to make Hyrcan hate his brother for having deprived him of the throne. Antipater swore to the High Priest that Aristobulus intended to murder him and finally persuaded him to flee to Arabia and beg King Aretas to help him regain his stolen kingdom. As a reward for this assistance Antipater promised to give Aretas twelve cities of Judea. Then the Arabian king and Hyrcan II moved towards Jerusalem with an army fifty thousand strong. (65 B. C.)

After a fruitless attempt to repulse the Arabs, Aristobulus and his followers entrenched themselves on Temple Hill in Jerusalem, which Aretas on entering Jerusalem, immediately besieged. He was joined by many Hebrew followers of Hyrcan and thus the fratricidal struggle continued bitterly. In the camp of the besieging army there was a man named Onias whom the people all looked upon as a saint, and Hyrcan's partisans begged him to pray to God to destroy Aristobulus and all his followes. But the good man, who loved his people with his whole heart, stood up and cried: "O, Lord; both the besiegers and the besieged are Thy children; therefore I pray Thee to do neither as the one side nor as the other desires." When the soldiers heard these words, they were so enraged that they stoned Onias to death.

Meanwhile the Passover holidays were approaching and the besieged people, lacking animals to sacrifice in the temple, were forced to buy them at very high prices from the other side. Every day a basket full of gold was lowered on iron chains from the wall surrounding the temple, and rams hoisted up in exchange. Once the Arabs played an insulting practical joke on Aristobulus' men and instead of a ram they sent back a pig, which the He-

brews looked upon as "unclean creature." The civil war was spreading rapidly.

§ 26.

The Invasion of Pompey.

While the two Asmonean brothers were maintaining their struggle against each other, the formidable army of the Roman Republic, led by the great general Pompey, was on its way to Jerusalem. The Roman state, of which Italy was the centre, had long ago reached the zenith of its political power, having absorbed the former dominions of Greece in Europe as well as the north of Africa.

The Republic's projected conquest of the whole of western Asia had brought the erstwhile dominions of Assyria, Babylonia and Persia one after another under Roman rule, and finally Syria too, which had been for more than two centuries in possession of the Greek Seleucides. Pompey completed the conquest of Syria and sent a detachment of his army under Scaurus from Damascus to Judea, where the envoys of the rival brothers, Hyrcan II and Aristobulus II, appeared before the Roman general, each appealing for help against the other. Aristobulus offered as much as four hundred talents and Hyrcan could therefore offer no less; but Pompey's legate preferred to secure the amity of Aristobulus who seemed a more reliable ally

on account of his being actually the reigning king. The bargain concluded, Scaurus ordered Aretas to withdraw the Arabian troops immediately from Jerusalem on pain of being declared an enemy of Rome. Hyrcan's ally dared not disobey and the siege was raised. As soon as he found his capital out of danger, Aristobulus sent a princely gift to Pompey at Damascus, a grape-vine wrought in gold by master-craftsmen, as a token of his gratitude for the assistance of Rome.

Shortly afterwards, both Aristobulus and Hyrcan appeared before Pompey and begged him to arbitrate between them, each pressing his claim to the throne. The "King of Kings," as Pompey was called in Asia, postponed his decision until he could go himself to Judea, for his desire was not so much to help either of the Judean princes as to conquer the country for Rome. Aristobulus, with characteristic shrewdness, suspected the dangerous scheme that lay behind the arbiter's reserve, and began to make preparations to defend his country, but Pompey, more than a match for him, had him arrested and detained in the Roman camp.

In the meantime the Roman army entered Judea, occupying many cities on their way, and finally reached Jerusalem. The followers of Hyrcan admitted them into the capital but the loyalists entrenched themselves once more upon

Temple Hill and put up a gallant defence of the national sanctuary. The Romans besieged them for three months without avail, and at last Pompey, becoming impatient, decided to make a decisive attack on the day of the Sabbath or on Yom-Kippur, when the Hebrews' laws governing the observance of such days would prevent them from taking up weapons in their own defence. This he did and the fortress on Temple Hill fell. The Roman soldiers forced an entrance into the holy precincts where the holiday service was in progress. The priests did not interrupt their prayers, but went calmly on with the service, in momentary expectation of death. Pompey penetrated into the inmost chambers of the temple and the absence of any image of a god so filled him with awe and wonder that he left without laying a profane hand upon anything there. He declared Judea a Roman province (63 B. C.) and conferred the title of "ethnarch" (chief of the tribe) and High Priest upon Hyrcan, whom he forbade, however, to assume the name of "king." Antipater, the Edomite, was appointed Hyrcan's "guardian," and as for Aristobulus and his children, Pompey took them all prisoners and carried them off to Rome.

Thus fratricidal strife within the royal family of Judea brought the country once again under alien rule, after almost a century of independ-

ence. The first Asmoneans had won their people's freedom by deeds of heroism, and the last, by their mutual ill-will and selfish dissensions, threw that freedom deliberately away.

§ 27.

Herod and Antigonus II.

Pompey, the conqueror of Judea, was one of three Roman generals who shared among themselves the government of the republic. The other members of the triumvirate were Crassus and the famous Julius Caesar. In the division of the Roman provinces, Syria and Judea fell to the share of Crassus, who, in his greed for money, entered Jerusalem and seized many of the temple treasures, but soon after he was killed on the battlefield in Parthia, which the Hebrews believed to be God's punishment for plundering the sanctuary. A sanguinary struggle for power then began between Pompey and Caesar, the two remaining triumvires, from which Caesar emerged the victor, and thenceforward he ruled as an autocrat over the entire Republic.

Aristobulus II, the deposed Judean King, died while the triumvirate war was raging. Caesar had set him free and given him a legion of Roman soldiers to lead against Pompey, but Pompey's friends learned of this appointment and got rid of the unfortunate man by means

of poison as he was on the point of leaving Rome for the scene of battle.

Meanwhile Judea was being ruled in the name of the weakling Hyrcan by his "guardian" Antipater. After Pompey's death and Caesar's victory, this wily Edomite declared his unreserved allegiance to the new ruler and lent him considerable aid in his campaign in Asia. As a reward, Julius Caesar appointed him governor of Judea, while Hyrcan continued to occupy the posts of High Priest and ethnarch. (47 B. C.) The most important offices in the state were given by Antipater to members of his own family; he made his eldest son, Phasael, governor of the city of Jerusalem, and his second son, Herod, governor of the district of Galilee in the north. This Herod, a most ambitious, adventurous and guileful man, was destined in after years to become King of Judea. From his boyhood he had dreamt of power, and was prepared to employ every means, fair or foul, to attain his goal. This Edomite's son could know no love for the Hebrew people; personal gain was all he cared for and he sought it at every turn. In order to ingratiate himself with the Romans, he executed without trial in Galilee a certain patriot named Hezekiah, together with his followers, for an alleged attempt to stir up revolt against the Romans and to rouse the Hebrews to fight for the liberation

of their country. But Hezekiah had been put to death without ever having been given a chance to defend himself against these accusations and the Sanhedrin summoned Herod to court for this arbitrary execution. He appeared before the tribunal, but not as a defendant; he entered the court in the midst of his soldiers, and the judges were afraid to convict him. But the President, an old man named Shemaiah, rose in his place and cried: "Know then, all of you, that the day shall come when this man whom you are afraid to condemn to-day, will condemn you every one to death." The council then decided to postpone their sentence and while they were hesitating, Herod fled to Syria under the protection of the Romans. With their help, after the death of his father, Antipater, he possessed himself of the political power in Judea, for Hyrcan was too pusillanimous to offer the slightest resistance. Herod betrothed himself to Hyrcan's granddaughter, the beautiful Mariamne, expecting that by marrying into the Asmonean family he was assuring his succession to the throne, which was the goal towards which he persistently and tirelessly strove. Fortune smiled upon him.

Julius Caesar was assassinated in Rome and Mark Antony, his famous general, became ruler of the East. By cunning and flattery Herod won the favor of Anthony and contrived to

have himself appointed co-governor of Judea with his brother, Phasaël, which post carried with it the privileges of the Roman procurators. (41 B. C.)

Many of the Hebrews were profoundly shocked at the action of the Roman ruler in setting sons of Antipater, the Edomite, to govern them. Their own nominee for the post was the young Antigonus, son of Aristobulus II, who had died in Rome, and the malcontents allied themselves with the Parthians, a very powerful Persian tribe, then in revolt against Rome. The Parthians and the followers of Antigonus joined forces and seized Jerusalem, capturing both the ex-king Hyrcan II and Phasaël, and Herod was forced to flee for safety. Phasaël foresaw the fate that was awaiting him and committed suicide, but Hyrcan II was carried away alive to Parthia, not, however, before his nephew Antigonus had ordered his ears to be cut off in order that he might never again perform the duties of High Priest. (According to the law no man having sustained any physical injury could ever be a priest.) The son of Aristobulus then became ruler over Judea as King Antigonus II. (40 B. C.)

Antigonus was unable to maintain his power longer than four years, for while he was peacefully governing his kingdom, Herod, a fugitive in Rome, had plotted his ruin. Antigonus was

looked upon in the Roman Senate as a rebel and a usurper of the power which Anthony had placed in other hands, and his deposition was therefore decreed in favor of Herod. Thereupon followed an invasion of Judea by Roman legions which accompanied Herod's return, and once more Jerusalem was besieged. The siege lasted for three months and at last the Romans took the capital by storm; a frightful massacre of the inhabitants announced its fall and Antigonus was captured without difficulty. When he was brought, a prisoner, before the Roman general, Soscius, he fell to weeping and earned himself the feminine nickname of "Antigone" thereby. At Herod's order, he was executed shortly afterwards. (37 B. C.) Thus, in a terrible welter of blood, Herod, the descendant of Edomites, favored by the Romans and loathed by the Hebrews, ascended the throne of Judea.

CHAPTER IV

KING HEROD AND HIS SUCCESSORS—

37 B. C.—6 C. E.

§ 28.

Herod's Oppression of the Hebrews.



HAVING, with the help of the Romans, seized the throne of Judea, Herod revenged himself savagely upon the adherents of Antigonus who remained loyal to the Asmonean dynasty. He banished many of them after depriving them of all their property, and amongst the exiles were many members of the Sanhedrin as well as representatives of noble and distinguished families. Herod was well aware of the hatred in which the Hebrews held him, and therefore surrounded himself with Greeks and Romans to whom he gave all the most important offices of state, but he was none the less haunted by the fear that the surviving Asmoneans would one day reconquer their throne. The ex-king and High Priest Hyrcan II, his daughter Alexandra and her children, Mariamne and Aristobulus III, were

the only remaining members of the family. Mariamne had become Herod's wife long before Antony ever made him ruler of Judea, for he had seen the advantage of allying himself with the then reigning house; and when, shortly after his accession to the throne, Hyrcan II, Mariamne's aged grandfather, returned home from Parthia where he had languished in prison for several years, Herod received him with a great show of friendliness, though he gave orders for the old man to be closely watched. Hyrcan was debarred for ever from resuming his priestly office on account of having had his ears cut off, so his young grandson, the seventeen-year-old Aristobulus was made High Priest in his stead. This handsome and noble youth was greatly beloved of the people, and when, clad in his sumptuous vestments, he conducted divine services for the first time in the temple of Jerusalem during the autumn holidays, he was acclaimed with shouts of joy. The popularity of Aristobulus was a source of torment and alarm to Herod, who saw in the young Asmonean priest, a dangerous rival who might at any time be expected to tear from his head the crown he had usurped. He therefore decided that he must rid himself of this new menace and invited Aristobulus to Jericho to attend certain festivities that he was holding there. (35 B. C.) While bathing with some of the young courtiers in the pool at

Herod's palace, the High Priest was drowned, ostensibly through his own carelessness, but actually by Herod's servants, acting on their master's secret orders. The people were not deceived, however, as to the true cause of Aristobulus' untimely end, though none dared to name the criminal. Queen Mariamne was unspeakably shocked by the sudden death of the brother whom she had always held in the deepest affection, and from that moment her husband became the object of her implacable hatred.

§ 29.

The Execution of Mariamne.

Alexandra, the mother of Aristobulus III, informed the Roman sovereign of her son's murder and begged him to investigate the crime. Antony, who was then in Syria, summoned Herod to appear before him and answer the charge, and the king of Judea obeyed in fear and trepidation. Before leaving for Syria, he placed Joseph, his sister Salome's husband, in charge of the palace and gave him secret orders to put the queen to death if he should fail to return from his interview with Antony, saying that so passionately did he love his beautiful wife that he could not endure the thought of her ever marrying another. During Herod's absence, false rumors were spread in Jerusalem

that Antony had made him pay for the murder of Aristobulus with his own life; tumult reigned in the palace and Queen Mariamne prepared to flee with her mother from the capital. Joseph took pity on the two women and so far from hindering their preparations, even betrayed to Mariamne Herod's secret order concerning her. While these things were going on, however, Herod had managed to placate Antony and obtain permission to return to Judea which he made haste to do. The queen received him without feigning the joy she was far from feeling at this homecoming, and Herod was not slow to guess, in the hostile manner of her greeting, her knowledge of his orders to the keeper of the palace. Not only did he know that Joseph had betrayed him, but hard upon this discovery came his sister Salome, a woman full of cruelty and malice, to denounce Mariamne, accusing her of too close intimacy with her husband. In his rage and jealousy, Herod caused Joseph to be instantly beheaded.

Soon the king found himself threatened with a new peril. Antony and Octavian-Augustus, the rulers of Rome, were disputing the supremacy between themselves, and at the famous battle of Actium (31 B. C.), Augustus defeated Antony and became the sole ruler of the kingdom of Rome, assuming the title of Emperor. Herod, having thus suddenly lost his protector,

hastened to obtain an audience with Augustus in order to receive due ratification of his right to the throne of Judea, but before his departure, the heartless, bloodthirsty tyrant had the aged Hyrcan II put to death, in order that the Romans might not be tempted to return the throne to the Asmoneans, whose last male descendant the ex-king was. He gave orders for the queen and her mother to be kept imprisoned in the fortress and again provided for the death of both of them in case he did not return to Jerusalem. Then he repaired to Rhodes where he sought Augustus's presence as a humble suppliant, laying his crown at the emperor's feet. His humility was well-aimed and found its mark; Augustus needed no persuasion to sanction his right to the Judean throne, and accompanied the royal ratification with the gift of certain border cities which Pompey had once taken away from Judea.

Herod returned in triumph to Jerusalem, but found nobody to share his jubilation either among the people or within his household. Mariamne, having again found out his cruel designs upon her life, would have none of him, and once more the treacherous Salome, still busy with her evil schemes, resorted to base slander against the queen. She warned Herod that his wife intended to put poison in his wine and so rid herself of him forever. The infuriated king

ordered Mariamne to be tried, charging her with infidelity and with plotting his death, and the judges, who knew better than to thwart the tyrant who had made slaves of all of them, sentenced the innocent Mariamne to death. She met her unjust fate with the courage and calm that befitted the noble queen she was. (29 B. C.)

§ 30.

Herod's Innovations in Judea.

No sooner had Mariamne been executed than Herod began to suffer the torments of remorse, and bitterly did he repent of having put to death the beautiful wife whom he had so passionately loved. He became a prey to the blackest depression, from which he would emerge only to give way to fits of ungovernable rage and frenzy. During one of these furious attacks he ordered the execution of all the judges who had taken part in the trial of Mariamne for the crimes of which she had been falsely accused. The king's health gave way under the stress of this mental torture, but upon his recovery he immediately sought fresh victims with whom to appease the fury that consumed him. Alexandra, his mother-in-law, and many distant relatives of the Asmoneans, as well as members of important Judean families, were put to death at his order.

He tried to drown his anguish and remorse in feverish activity, and in order to distract his mind as much as possible from his thoughts, he had magnificent buildings built all over the capital and in provincial cities; he introduced Roman games and recreations for the people whom he tried to accustom to Roman ways of living. He built a splendid theatre in Jerusalem and a great circus on the outskirts of the town, where games of all kinds were held. Wrestlers, gladiators, horsemen, circus-riders, actors and musicians filled the Holy City; all manner of athletic contests were fought out on the public squares, particularly those in which athletes pitted their skill and strength against wild animals. These innovations, while they gained Herod the goodwill of the Romans, on the other hand aroused the hatred of all the pious Hebrews who regarded such heathen amusements with the utmost scorn and disgust. Ten of these staunch upholders of the faith conspired together against Herod and decided to kill him where he sat in one of the theatres he often frequented, but the plot was somehow discovered and the conspirators paid for it with their lives. Thereafter the king always appeared in public surrounded by a body-guard of Gauls, Thracians and Teutons.

In emulation of the Roman emperor Augustus, Herod made a great point of displaying the pomp and splendor of his kingdom. He

built many fine cities on the Judean frontiers, and on the Mediterranean shore, not far from Jaffa, one named Caesarea which was populated chiefly by Greeks and Romans. The ancient city of Samaria was renamed Sebasta and beautified with temples and monuments. The king built a new palace in Jerusalem at enormous cost, and made a bid for the favor of the Hebrews by setting on foot the restoration of the temple which was very old and too small to accommodate all who wished to worship there. He told the builders to take their orders from the priests and teachers, so that the work might be done in the right way. The temple took more than ten years to rebuild, but when it was finished, it was a marvel of beauty; many of the chambers were of marble with walls overlaid with gold; the Temple of Solomon itself had been no more splendid nor imposing. The Hebrews were disposed to forgive Herod much for having rebuilt the temple, but he continued to act in a manner calculated to antagonize them, as for example, when he placed the Roman emblem, a golden eagle, immediately above the entrance to the temple, thereby offering a profound affront to their religious and national sensibilities. His arbitrary methods in the matter of appointing High Priests was another source of dissatisfaction: he was in the habit of distributing these offices to his own per-

sonal favorites, men totally unworthy of priesthood, and besides that, he dismissed and replaced them so often and with so little reason, that the people lost all their respect both for the position and for those who occupied it.

§ 31.

Herod's Last Years.

The latter years of Herod's reign were darkened by cruelties more hideous than any committed in his earlier life. He had many children by his various wives, and amongst them two sons by Mariamne of the Asmonean dynasty. Their names were Alexander and Aristobulus, and they resembled their mother both in outward beauty and in nobility of character. The young princes lived at Augustus' court where they received the finest secular education Rome had to offer, and when they returned to Jerusalem, the people welcomed them joyfully as the longed-for heirs to the throne. But they had a dangerous rival in Antipater, an elder son of Herod's by his first Edomite wife, who considered himself the king's rightful heir and nourished the deepest hatred for his half-brothers, the people's favorites. Antipater entered into a conspiracy with the king's cruel sister, Salome, and together they plotted the downfall of Mariamne's sons. They succeeded in making Herod believe that the young princes had

planned to kill him in order to avenge their mother's death, and the king, whose suspicions were ever on the alert, did not need any persuasion to credit the dastardly slander. He had both the youths brought to trial and himself accused them before the court. The judges condemned them to death, and Alexander and Aristobulus met the same fate as their mother. They were executed in Sebasta in the year 7 B. C.

Then, to his unbounded joy, the crafty Antipater was declared heir to the throne, but his triumph was shortlived. A plot to poison Herod and thereby hasten Antipater's succession was soon afterwards brought to light, and reported to the court of Jerusalem. Investigation proved that Antipater himself had taken part in the conspiracy against his father; he was tried and sentenced to death, but Herod postponed the execution and kept his guilty son in prison.

This accumulation of troubles achieved the final wreck of Herod's health and a horrible disease confined him at last to his bed. One day Jerusalem rang with a false rumor that the king was dead, and at once Judah and Mattathias, two bold Pharisees, rushed, with a crowd of followers, to the temple and destroyed the golden eagle, the hated Roman emblem, which Herod had set over the gates. The king's mortal sickness did not prevent him from pun-

ishing this act of defiance; he had the rebel leaders seized and brought before him, and sentenced them to be burned alive. Five days before his death, Herod ordered his son, Antipater, to be executed, because he had found out his attempt to bribe the guards to help him to escape. It was said that the emperor Augustus, upon hearing of the execution of Herod's third son, exclaimed: "It is better to be the King of Judea's pig than his son." And another rumor had it that before his death Herod bade his courtiers lure all the most important citizens of Judea to the circus at Jericho and kill them on the day he died, so that the people might weep on that day and not rejoice at their deliverance from his tyranny. Thus ended Herod's stormy reign which had lasted for thirty-three years. (4 B. C.) The people of Judea surnamed him contemptuously "the Edomite" or "the half-Judean," but the Romans called him "the Great."

§ 32.

Archelaus. Internal Disorder in Judea.

Before his death Herod had divided Judea among his three sons, Archelaus, Herod-Antipas and Philip, subject, as always, to the sanction of the Roman emperor. When the seven days of mourning were over, Archelaus, as the chief heir, went to the temple and delivered an inau-

gural address to the people. In reply to his speech, loud demands for reforms arose, the people insisting that they be eased of the burden of state taxes, that the taxes on necessities be lifted and that all political prisoners who had languished in dungeons during Herod's reign be set free. Archelaus promised to satisfy all these demands as soon as possible after the Emperor had confirmed his title to the throne. But the people refused to wait and the capital immediately broke out in revolt. The agitation spread with great rapidity, for it was the season of the Passover and thousands of worshippers from all the cities of the kingdom were gathered in Jerusalem. Archelaus saw that he would have to quell the rebellion before it had time to grow beyond his control, and ordered soldiers to charge the populace assembled near the temple. Some three thousand perished, and all those who had come from the other cities to attend the festival services were expelled from Jerusalem on the very eve of the Passover. Then Archelaus, having at the outset of his reign incurred the hatred of his people, left for Rome to receive Augustus's formal recognition of his right to rule Judea. His brothers followed him shortly afterwards to apply for the ratification of their own claims, and in the absence of the princes, Sabinius, one of the Roman generals, undertook to maintain or-

der in their dominions, but his greed and harsh treatment of the people only increased the prevailing discontent. Riots broke out not only in Jerusalem but all over the country in a vain hope of throwing off the yoke of the Romans and of the hated "Herodians." Sabinus became alarmed at last and locked himself up in the royal palace with his soldiers until Varus, the chief Roman procurator of Syria, brought a large army to his rescue. Varus punished the rebels with intense brutality and crucified two thousand of them as an example to the rest.

The Emperor Augustus confirmed the claims of Herod's heirs and appointed Archelaus ruler over southern Judea with its capital, Jerusalem, but he allowed him only the title of ethnarch, or chief of a tribe, and not that of king. Herod-Antipas received the northern province of Galilee and Philip the northeastern provinces beyond the Jordan. Archelaus did not enjoy his power very long. Secure in the protection of Rome, he oppressed the people cruelly and, like his father, appointed and dismissed High Priests for no other reason than the whim of the moment, and very often he committed open violations of the laws of the Jewish religion. At last the Hebrews sent envoys to Augustus to complain against Archelaus' countless acts of defiance of the law, and Archelaus was summoned to Rome where Augustus deprived him

of his power and banished him to the distant land of Gaul. Southern Judea then fell under the direct domination of Rome, and was ruled by procurators appointed by the emperor. (6 B. C.)

§ 33.

The Spiritual Life of the Hebrews. Hillel and Shamai.

The reason for the Hebrews' dissatisfaction with the rule of Herod and his successors lay chiefly in the fact that all those rulers attempted to introduce into Judea Graeco-Roman customs which were entirely opposed to the spirit of Judaism. The worthiest and most intelligent Judeans saw that the admirers of Roman customs were as dangerous to the Hebrew nation as the Hellenists had been in the past, with their passion for Greek learning and culture. Most of the loyalists were Pharisees and they tried their utmost to protect the spiritual life of the Hebrews against pernicious influences from without. They directed the activities of the Sanhedrin, still the main legislative body, and at the time of Herod's accession to the throne two great religious teachers were at its head. These were Shemaiah and Abtalion. They lost no opportunity of continuing the dissemination of education among the people, and under their guidance, able men studied the re-

corded and legendary laws of the religion. When they died, the leadership of the Sanhedrin was taken over, though not for long, by religious teachers of the family of Bnai-Batarah. One day, on the eve of Passover, the Sanhedrin was in session upon a religious problem of exceptional complexity; not one of all that learned assembly but had declared himself unable to solve it, when a young man from Babylonia was invited to the meeting and, the question having been propounded, he solved it most brilliantly by reference to certain opinions of Shemaiah and Abtalion. Thereupon the Bnai-Batarahs had to yield their position at the head of the Sanhedrin to the young scholar who soon became known to the nation under the name of Hillel.

Hillel was born in Babylonia of a distinguished family which was supposed to have descended in a direct line from King David. Having arrived in the capital a stranger, he had suffered great privations, but his passion for learning overcame every obstacle. The legend tells how, one winter evening, Hillel was denied admittance to the lectures of Shemaiah and Abtalion because he had no money to pay the gatekeeper. It needed but a moment's reflection, however, to scale the wall of the school building and from a window-ledge the eager young student listened to the masters' dis-

courses. So absorbed was he in their expositions that he did not feel the cold penetrate his body nor the snow cover him with its heavy blanket, but at daybreak they found him at his window all but frozen to death, and he was only with great difficulty revived.

Soon Hillel had acquired such wide knowledge of the law, both written and verbal, that he was elected to the Sanhedrin, of which the above incident of his happy solution of the difficult problem made him president. He was the greatest teacher of his time in all matters concerning the law, and like Ezra, his countryman, who many years before had labored to spread the knowledge of the Scripture among all the Hebrews, Hillel went about the country teaching the people to observe and understand the law. His lectures were afterwards much elaborated and written down under the name of "Mishna." Hillel's chief contribution to Hebrew lore was that he linked up the accumulated unwritten laws of Judaism with the written laws of the Bible, and to these he also added some new ones based on the ideas and expressions found in various books of the Bible. He owed most of his fame, however, to the precepts of morality which he formulated, all being based upon the loftiest truths implicit in the Biblical code.

Hillel looked upon religion as a means towards the moral perfection of man. "The duty of a man towards his neighbor" he placed much higher than "the duty of man towards God." One day a heathen, desirous of embracing Judaism, but frightened away by the multitudinous laws and rites that hedged it round, appealed to Hillel to tell him in as few words as possible in what the Hebrew religion essentially consisted. And Hillel answered him thus: "Do not unto others what you would not have done unto yourself. That is the essence of the Torah, and all the rest is nothing but explanation. Now go and learn." There is another story told of Hillel's kindness and patience. Two men made a wager, one declaring that he would succeed in making Hillel lose his temper with him, and the other denying that he ever could do so. Accordingly the first man went to Hillel's house on Friday evening when the master was taking his bath, and demanded to see him on very urgent business. When Hillel, interrupting his bath, came out to see the visitor, the latter put some trivial question to him which the good teacher answered with the greatest patience. Some minutes later, the impertinent fellow reappeared with another question, equally foolish, but insisting upon having it answered there and then, and again a third time; but Hillel received him always with the same gentleness. At last the

man grew angry and cried: "There ought to be fewer men like you, Hillel, among the people of Israel." "Why, so, my son?" asked Hillel without a trace of irritation. "Because I have lost a wager through you," was the answer. "It is better that you should lose your wager," said the master "than I my patience."

Hillel's favorite sayings were these: Love peace and try to establish it in every place; love men and bring them nearer to the law of God. Do not judge your neighbor until you have also been in the same position as he. If I am not for myself who shall be for me? But if I am for myself alone, what am I then? He who would make his name famous loses his name; and he who does not acquire new knowledge loses the old.

Another great religious teacher named Shammai, a contemporary of Hillel's, shared with him the position at the head of the Sanhedrin. Shammai was a man of very different character from Hillel, and as different was the spirit of his teachings. He frowned upon even the slightest deviation from the strict observance of the laws and forbade many things that Hillel permitted. Complete adherence to the laws and rites of the religion were to him the first essentials, and he was very haughty and stern in manner. The same heathen who had consulted Hillel as to the true meaning of Judaism, went

to Shammai with the same question, asking to be answered "while he stood on one leg," but the severe Shammai drove him away. How different was Hillel's reception of this seeker after the truth, and with what gentleness and simplicity did he draw the would-be convert towards the teachings of Judaism with the sentence quoted above in which he expressed the basis of the entire religion in the single principle of love for one's neighbor.

There is another story that tells of a heathen declaring to Shammai that he greatly wished to adopt Judaism if he might keep only the written laws and dispense with the verbal ones. The compromise was harshly rejected and the heathen was about to be dismissed when Hillel interposed, and consented to admit him as a member of the Hebrew community on condition that he would allow himself to be taught. On the first day the master showed the convert the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in their right order and next day the same letters, with the order reversed. When the pupil asked the reason for turning the letters about, Hillel answered: "They are the same, only in a different form, and the written law stands in the same relation to the verbal as these letters to yesterday's." The two new converts meeting afterwards, said "The sternness of Shammai almost

repulsed us from these holy teachings, but Hillel's gentleness drew us back again."

After the death of Hillel and Shammai (about 5 A. D.) their disciples divided into two religious parties or schools, which differed in their opinions on many points of law and creed, as well as in interpretation of the Biblical code. The two schools came into very frequent conflict and created a state of disharmony within the Sanhedrin, but the constant controversies, though they considerably weakened the unity of the Pharisees, served at the same time as a powerful stimulus to intellectual activity. The spirit of inquiry and of doctrinal research thus awakened grew apace, and led eventually to the writing of the Talmud.

CHAPTER V

JUDEA UNDER ROMAN DOMINATION

(5-66 A. D.)

§ 34.

The First Roman Procurators.



AFTER the deposition and banishment of Archelaus, his brothers, Philip and Herod-Antipas, continued to rule in their respective provinces of Transjordan and Galilee. Herod-Antipas made the city of Sepphoris his capital and founded a new city besides, near the lake of Genesareth, calling it Tiberias in honor of the emperor who had succeeded Augustus upon the Roman throne. This city became in after years famous for its mineral springs. Philip of Transjordan built a magnificent capital near the source of the Jordan, and called it Caesarea Philippi to distinguish it from the other Caesarea on the seashore. The two brothers ruled uninterruptedly for almost thirty years as vassals of the Roman emperors. (34-39 A. D.)

During this period, the interior of Judea,

whose center was Jerusalem, was governed by Roman officials called Procurators, and as Judea was considered part of the province of Syria, the Judean Procurators were subordinate to the chief Roman rulers in Syria. They lived in Caesarea-on-Sea, the city founded by Herod the Great; and the powers vested in them covered a very wide field. They collected taxes from the Hebrews, appointed and dismissed High Priests and had the right to veto over the decisions of the Sanhedrin. The first Procurator, who was sent to govern Judea after Archelaus was deposed (6 A. D.), was a general of the Roman cavalry, one Coponius, a native of Rome. During his administration, a census was taken in Judea to fix the amount of taxes due from the people to the emperor. This census and the stringent rules concerning tax-collection which followed hard upon it, gave the people a taste of the harshness of the new government under which they had fallen. The Procurators, who were changed at frequent intervals, opposed the Judeans, and weighed them down under a heavy burden of taxation, arbitrarily imposed. But the emperor Tiberius (14-37 A. D.), in appointing one Valerius Gratus Procurator of Judea, warned him against treating the Hebrews with undue severity. "A good shepherd," he said, "shears his sheep, but does not skin them."

After Gratus, Pontius Pilate, a cruel and crafty man, became the Roman representative in Judea, and he took with him to Jerusalem Roman banners bearing the likeness of the emperor which the heathens were accustomed to worship. But the Hebrews, faithful to the Sinai commandments which forbade the worship of visible images in any form whatsoever, rose in protest against Pilate's action in bringing the banners into the holy city, and he was forced to remove them. On one occasion Pilate took a sum of money from the treasury of the temple, in order to build an aqueduct, and when the people gathered about the temple loudly denouncing his misappropriation of their funds, he sent soldiers into the crowd, in disguise and with clubs hidden about their persons, who attacked the Hebrews, killing many of them. The name of Pontius Pilate is further associated with another deed of ruthlessness. Jesus Christ was then in Judea, preaching his religious doctrines, and the report having been carried to the Procurator that Jesus was being hailed as the "king of Judea," the Roman, with his satellite Kaiapha the High Priest of Jerusalem, and with the approval of the Sanhedrin, condemned the young preacher to death. (33 A. D.) Some years later, however, Pontius Pilate was deprived of his office for certain violations of the law, and banished to Gaul.

§ 35.

The Emperor Caligula.

There lived at that time in Rome, at the court of the emperor Tiberius, a young man named Agrippa who was the grandson of Herod I and queen Mariamne, and the son of the executed Aristobulus. His life among eminent and wealthy Roman families had accustomed him to gaiety and extravagance; he squandered all his fortune and was heavily and perpetually in debt. At last, in fear of his creditors, he fled from Rome and wandered for a long time from one foreign city to another, and when at last he returned, it was to find that the emperor Tiberius was nearing his end. Agrippa became great friends with Caius Caligula, the heir to the throne, and was one day overheard saying that the sooner he saw Caligula emperor the better he would be pleased. This remark was carried to Tiberius, who flew into a violent rage and ordered Agrippa to be put in chains and thrown into prison. Six months later the emperor died (37 A. D.) and his successor, Caligula, set his friend free, presenting him, at the same time, with a chain of gold as a reminder of the one of iron which he had worn during his imprisonment. The new emperor not only made Agrippa ruler of Transjordan, deposing Philip, but took Galilee away from Herod-Antipas also, giving both provinces over to his

favorite. Thus Agrippa became the ruler over the greater part of Judea, and was even allowed to assume the title of King. He left Rome, passing through Alexandria, the Egyptian capital on his way, to take up his government of Judea, and there he encountered much that was distressing and melancholy to witness.

Ever since Egypt had changed hands from the Ptolemys to the Romans, which was during the reign of Augustus, there had been continual strife between the Hebrew and the Greek communities of Alexandria. Of the former, there were almost a million, and by their industry and sobriety they had attained to a very high degree of prosperity. Their commerce had not ceased to expand and they were growing richer every year, while a large section of the Greek population was falling deeper and deeper into poverty, as a result of the idleness, indolence and dissipation of their lives. The Hebrews had also become successful rivals of the Greeks in the domain of arts and sciences.

The Hebrew scientists wrote their works in Greek, and the greatest philosopher of the age was Philo, a Hebrew of Alexandria. A follower of the ancient Athenian philosopher, Plato, Philo tried to reconcile his metaphysics with the religious tenets of Moses and the Hebrew prophets. In his works, to quote only his "Life of Moses" and "The Creation of the World," he endeavoured to prove that the Bib-

lical stories and laws contained profound moral truths, and in support of his theories gave many Biblical expressions an allegorical interpretation, revealing besides their literal meaning, the philosophy underlying them. Philo expressed the essence of his teaching in the following words: "He who strengthens in his soul these truths: that God exists, that He is One, that He created the world, that the world is also one and that God will never cease to protect that which He has created, will lead a happy life."

The success of the Hebrews in every field of human activity aroused anger and jealousy among the Greeks which they lost no opportunity of showing. When Agrippa, on his way to Judea, passed through Alexandria, and the Hebrews received him as a king, the Greek mobs met him with derision and insults. (38 A. D.) Not content with this malevolent outburst against the king himself, a crowd of Greeks forced their entrance into synagogues and set up statues of the Roman emperor in the holy places, knowing that the Hebrews' religious laws forbade their having images of any kind in their houses of worship. Flaccus, the Roman procurator of Judea, instead of protecting the Hebrews, joined their enemies against them, and when the former attempted to defend themselves against the mob of savage rioters, Flaccus ordered his soldiers to take away

their weapons, thus inciting the Greeks to further violence. The soldiers seized thirty-eight representative members of the Hebrew community, dragged them into a theater and there beat them cruelly with sticks. Then the Hebrews of Alexandria sent envoys to Rome to implore the emperor's protection, and the chief of the envoys was the philosopher Philo. The Alexandrian Greeks, on their side, also sent envoys to Rome to complain of the Hebrews, and a writer named Apion, an old and relentless foe of the Hebrews, headed their delegation.

It happened at that time that the emperor was greatly enraged against the Hebrews for the following reasons:

Ever since the earliest years of his reign, Caligula had shown symptoms of mental derangement. His delusion took the form of believing himself a god, and he ordered that every nation of the Roman empire should place statues of him in their temples and offer up prayers before them. The Judeans were horrified at this order on account of the explicit prohibitions of their religion in such matters, but Caligula refused to consider their side of the question and ordered Petronius, the procurator of Syria, to place his statute in the temple of Jerusalem and see that the Hebrews worshipped it, if not willingly, then by force. Petronius went to Jerusalem with a large army

and demanded the people's submission to the emperor's commands. But they rose in defence of their faith and an immense crowd surrounded Petronius' residence in Tiberias, besieging him for forty days with prayers not to defile the holy shrine with his profane effigy. Petronius realized that he would never be able to carry out the emperor's order without terrible bloodshed, and sent a report to Rome to that effect. Agrippa, returning to Rome about the same time, also tried to induce Caligula to yield to reason, and no one can tell how the affair might have ended, had not Caligula suddenly died, the victim of a murderous plot. The emperor Claudius succeeded him. (41 A. D.)

§ 36.

King Agrippa I.

When Caligula died, Agrippa helped in securing the election of Claudius to the imperial throne, and as a reward the new monarch gave him Southern Judea in addition to the provinces he already had. Agrippa thus became king over all Judea within the same frontiers as those which had bounded the kingdom in the Asmoneans' time. His short reign (41-44 A. D.) seemed to the Hebrews like a brief revival of their happy past. Once established at Jerusalem, Agrippa renounced the frivolities of his

younger days and threw himself heart and soul into the direction of the affairs of his state.

The people, still smarting under the cruel treatment they had recently suffered at the hands of the Roman procurators, received their king with great joy and very soon he had won their affection completely. King Agrippa never failed to show the greatest respect for the religious customs of his Hebrew subjects, which did not prevent him, however, from maintaining friendly relations with the Greeks and Romans as well. In matters of state he found staunch supporters in the Pharisees, who enjoyed the people's confidence far more than did the wealthy Sadducees. Agrippa reinstated the Sanhedrin with all its former rights, and appointed pious and honest men to the High Priests' posts. He was a simple man, and during the "festival of the harvest" (Shebuoth) observed the ancient Hebrew custom of carrying his basket of fruit to the temple with his own hands, like any ordinary farmer.

One day as Agrippa was reading aloud in the temple certain chapters of Deuteronomy, he came to the passage which reads: "One from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee" (XVII, 15), he suddenly burst into tears, remembering that he was himself of Edomite descent on the side of his grandfather, Herod I. His grief moved the congregation profoundly,

and they cried out with one voice, "Do not grieve, Agrippa. You are our brother." And in truth, the people all looked upon this son of the executed Aristobulus and grandson of the Asmonean Mariamne, as more of an Asmonean than of an Herodian.

Agrippa intended to build a high fortification wall around Jerusalem to protect the capital against possible attack, and the work was well under way when the Roman procurator of Syria reported the fact to the emperor Claudius, adding that the King of Judea probably meant ultimately to secede from Rome, so Agrippa was ordered to stop building. Shortly after this he died, quite suddenly, while attending public athletic games in Caesarea. The Hebrews mourned their king with deep sincerity, but to the Greeks and Romans it was on the contrary a joyful event and they celebrated it with gay feasts and popular rejoicing.

During the reign of Agrippa I, Gamaliel, a grandson of the great teacher Hillel, sat at the head of the Sanhedrin. He directed the activities of the council with great wisdom, adapting the laws to the requirements of changing conditions. One of his disciples was Saul of Tarsus who later on renounced Judaism to become the chief apostle of Christianity under the name of Paul. Many heathens were beginning to profess monotheism, some accepting the new faith according to the Christian teachings,

others according to the Hebraic. Amongst the heathens of Syria and Asia Minor, most of the converts to Judaism were women. Helena, queen of the little kingdom of Adiabene in Mesopotamia, and her sons Izates and Monobaz, embraced Judaism and other members of the royal family followed their example. Helena made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to worship the God of Israel at a time when famine was raging in the capital, and donated a large sum of money for the purchase of bread for the starving people. When the queen and her son, Izates, died, their bodies were taken to Jerusalem and buried in a vault by themselves, and Izates' children and grandchildren migrated to Judea, remaining there until the final downfall of the kingdom.

§ 37.

Agrippa II and the Roman Procurators.

Agrippa I was survived by his seventeen-year-old son, Agrippa II, and three daughters, one of whom, Berenice, was famed for her beauty. The Emperor Claudius desired to appoint the young Agrippa king of Judea, but influential courtiers dissuaded him from carrying out his wish, pointing out that although educated in Rome, the youth was not of an age to assume the responsibilities of so high an office. So that once more Judea had to submit to government by procurators. (44 A. D.)

The people, who had grown unaccustomed during the past few years to the rule of aliens, were again made discontented and unhappy, and the harsh conduct of the Romans was calculated to fan their resentment into revolt. One of the procurators, a Roman named Fadus, mercilessly suppressed every attempt at greater freedom, and even went so far as to have Theudas, one of the agitators, beheaded for claiming to be a prophet come to liberate Judea. Though himself a heathen, Fadus presumed to interfere in the Hebrews' religious affairs, appointing High Priests and keeping their holiday vestments in his possession. Later on, however, the emperor gave Agrippa the right to appoint the holders of this office and generally to superintend the temple of Jerusalem. He also bestowed upon him the small principality of Chalcis in Syria, and thus the heir of the kings of Judea descended to the humble status of assistant to Roman procurators, rulers over the country that should rightfully have been his. But Agrippa had neither the ability nor the inclination to reign independently, preferring the gaiety of life in Rome amongst his aristocrat and courtier friends to devoting his days to the service of his people.

Meanwhile dissatisfaction with the Roman administration was growing apace in Judea. Cumanus, procurator from 48 to 52 A. D. was in the habit of surrounding the temple in Jeru-

saalem with Roman soldiers at festival times, with a view to preventing disorders, but the presence of aliens in their holy place outraged the piety of the Hebrews beyond endurance. One day a soldier committed some improper action within the precincts of the temple grounds, and a vast crowd of worshippers, assembled for the Pass-over witnessed the desecration. Their indignation rose so high that they began to stone the Roman detachments and revile the procurator. Then Cumanus sent auxiliary troops to the help of the temple guard and the unarmed Hebrews fled into the narrow, winding streets surrounding the temple. In the panic, many were trampled to death; hundreds of corpses were strewn in the streets, and the holiday, instead of being a season of rejoicing, became one of deep mourning, with many families weeping over their innocent dead. Such clashes were of very frequent occurrence and the procurators rarely admitted the Hebrews were right. The successors of Cumanus were, like him, invariably hostile towards the people over whom they had been sent to rule.

Still less did the Hebrews find a protector in Nero, the new emperor. A dispute over some point of civil right arising between Greeks and Hebrews, both parties took their grievances before Nero who gave the verdict in favor of the former, though they were clearly in the wrong. This decided the Hebrews to attempt an uprising, and they began to make preparations ac-

cordingly. Rallies of volunteers took place in various centers, all eager to pit their strength against the Romans. The leaders of these bands were men who loved their country deeply and asked nothing better than to be allowed to sacrifice their lives to achieve its freedom. These open enemies of the alien rulers were called "zealots." Simultaneously with their appearance, another rebel faction sprang into existence, acting not openly but in secret, and they were called "Sicarii," i. e., fighters with the dagger. They all carried short daggers hidden under their cloaks and whenever possible attempted the lives of Romans and even of their fellow Hebrews whom they suspected of friendliness towards Rome.

§ 38.

The Beginning of the Uprising.

The Hebrews' patience with Rome came at last to an end when one Gessius Florus, a native Roman, was appointed procurator of Judea. He arrived in the Hebrews' country "as an executioner to punish the condemned." He robbed the people, extorting money from rich and poor alike, and committed every lawless action against them. The heathens in Judea, seeing how Florus plundered the Hebrews with impunity, decided that as the law had evidently ceased to protect them, others might as well share the profits of persecution with the

procurators. In the seaport of Caesarea, which was where the Roman rulers usually lived, Greeks and Hebrews came into more frequent conflict than ever, and both Greeks and Romans took to baiting the Hebrew Caesareans at every step, since they knew that Florus was on their side. The insolent heathen gathered about the synagogue, interrupting the services with shouts of mockery and derision. This exasperated the Hebrews to such an extent that a hand to hand fight took place in the streets, but the Hebrews fared badly at their enemies' hands. They then left Caesarea on the Sabbath, and took their holy books with them to a neighboring town from which place of temporary refuge they sent envoys to Florus begging his protection. The procurator, so far from paying any attention to their prayer, had the envoys cast into prison.

The news of this outrage aroused deep indignation in Jerusalem which rose to fury when Florus sent an order to the supervisor of the temple to give him seventeen talents of gold from the temple treasury. The procurator's request was haughtily refused, and the people no longer troubled to hide the hatred in which they held him. While the crowds reviled and cursed his name, some went about the streets with beggars' cups in their hands, mockingly imploring alms of the passers-by for "poor, destitute Florus." Hearing of which, the incensed procurator forced his way into the capital at

the head of an armed detachment, and demanded the money, also the surrender of those who had taken part in the public mockery against him. Both orders being refused, Florus sent his soldiers to plunder the "upper market" as the wealthy residential quarters of the town was called. This was the signal for a terrible outbreak of destruction, massacre and robbery; in vain Agrippa's sister, Berenice, besought Florus to stop the devastation of the capital; he was inexorable. But the people rose in their own defence, and when fresh troops were brought into Jerusalem with the object of seizing the temple, vast numbers of raging Hebrews swarmed through the streets that led to the temple hill and forced the Roman soldiers out of them. They were assisted by other citizens who shot at the Romans from their housetops, and the upshot was that Florus and part of his army were forced to leave Jerusalem and go back to Caesarea.

Not every Hebrew joined the rebellion at the beginning, however. Only the poor and the zealots participated in the struggle against Florus, and the chief of these earliest revolutionaries was Eleazar-ben-Ananias, a descendant of at family of High Priests. The richer citizens, having much to lose, preferred to look for a way of making peace with the Romans, and the head of their party was Agrippa II.

Immediately after the above encounter between the zealots and the procurator, Cestius Gallus, the chief procurator of Syria, sent an envoy to Jerusalem to investigate the cause of the riot. In the presence of this envoy Agrippa made a long speech before the assembled people, fervently imploring the Hebrews not to provoke war with a great power like Rome, for it could only lead to disaster. His address made a deep impression upon the audience who declared themselves willing to submit to the Roman emperor and pay their taxes regularly once more. Unfortunately Agrippa then made the mistake of proposing that the people should also consent to recognize the authority of the hated Florus, and in that moment he destroyed all the good his first speech had done. His hearers burst into furious protest, calling him a traitor, and became generally so threatening that when they shouted at him to leave, he wisely did so. The warlike zealots were masters of the situation and the rebellion went on spreading. The priests ceased to offer the daily sacrifice for the welfare of the emperor, thus declaring a definite rupture with Rome. The pacifist party were bitterly opposed to the tactics of the zealots and began to fight against them on their own account. A seven days' battle took place in the streets of Jerusalem between Agrippa's troops and the zealots, in which the latter were again

victorious. The extremists, thoroughly roused, burned down the palaces of Agrippa and Berenice and killed many Hebrews whom they suspected of sympathy with the Romans.

When Cestius Gallus heard what was going on in Jerusalem, he took a large army with him into Jerusalem to put down the rebellion, destroying and pillaging all the towns he passed on the way. The army arrived near Jerusalem about the time of the autumn holidays, Succoth, and in view of the impending peril, the zealots' forces increased greatly. Under the leadership of Simon-bar-Giora, they left Jerusalem in vast numbers, to meet the legions of Cestius, and so skillful was the generalship that determined their method of attack that the Roman army was forced to fall back. Some days later, however, they came on again, and made ready to lay siege to the capital. They occupied the unfortified outskirts of Jerusalem, but were unable to overcome the valiant defenders of the inner city. Cestius then gave orders to raise the siege and retreat, and the Hebrews, seeing this, gave chase. The Romans suffered a crushing defeat and Cestius was put to ignominious flight with the remnants of his great army.

This victory gave the Hebrews courage to continue their opposition to Rome, and a great many moderates who had feared to go into a

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war against the empire, now joined forces with the zealots. Thus a majority of the people went over to the rebel party and a decisive war with Rome became inevitable.

CHAPTER VI

THE WAR WITH ROME AND THE DOWNFALL OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDEA—

66-70 A. D.

§ 39.

Preparations For the War.



THE Hebrew insurgents foresaw that the Roman emperor would lose no time in sending a large army to put down the rebellion, and accordingly they set to work with great energy to prepare for the invasion. A provisional government was formed, consisting of Pharisees and aristocrats, and the Sanhedrin, with Simon-bar-Gamaliel, a grandson of Hillel, at its head, made an elaborate plan for the defence of Judea. They appointed two chiefs for Jerusalem, Joseph-ben-Gorion and the High Priest Anan, the fortifications were strengthened, soldiers were mobilized and great stores of ammunition and food laid in.

The Romans were expected to march on Judea not by way of the nearest port, but overland from Syria to Galilee which point was therefore fortified to withstand the initial onslaught. The chief of the army in Galilee was Joseph-ben-Mattathias, who later on acquired fame as an historian under the name of Josephus Flavius. Under his supervision the most important Galilean towns were adequately equipped with walls of defence, troops and armaments.

In order to assure the effectiveness of all these preparations, it was necessary that the populace as a whole should be brought to a spirit of absolute unity and mutual accord, but unhappily both the people and their leaders were divided into factions with apparently irreconcilable views. In the Sanhedrin itself, some of the members were for a decisive war with Rome, and the complete liberation of Judea, while others, realizing the futility of such an attempt on the part of the Hebrew people, were ready to recognize Rome's supremacy so long as the emperor would guarantee not to interfere with their religious and spiritual liberties. The people were also divided into two enemy parties, the revolutionaries, or zealots, on the one side and the pacifists on the other. Joseph-ben-Mattathias, the governor of Galilee, was secretly against the war, though for purely per-

sonal reasons, as will appear. He belonged to an illustrious family of priests and had been educated in a Pharisee school. At the age of twenty-five he went to Rome where, in contact with the educated and cultured Romans, his opinions on various subjects underwent a considerable change. He found that the Hebrews were superior to the Romans only in matters of religion and morality, but in politics, administrative ability and secular education, the Romans left them very far behind. He believed that Judea, like the other small kingdoms of the East, by remaining under the protection of a powerful state like Rome, had everything to gain and nothing to lose, and he looked upon the projected war as a foolhardy enterprise which could only end in failure. He knew that Judea must inevitably succumb in so unequal a conflict and saw all her people once more banished by the conquerors to live in exile in distant lands.

Obviously Joseph, in view of these opinions, was not the man to be in command of the Galilean army, and this was very clear to Johannan of Gishala, one of the principal leaders of the zealot party and a warrior of great courage who dearly loved his country and hated its oppressors with all his heart. Johannan was not slow to observe that Joseph bore himself as one greatly disinclined for a fight and anxious to

arrive at a basis of peaceful reconciliation, seeing which the zealot chief immediately reported to the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem that in entrusting a commander of Joseph's type with the defense of Galilee, they were making a mistake which would probably cost them very dear. Joseph, on his side, being very shrewd and eloquent, succeeded in clearing himself before the Sanhedrin and in proving that Johannan's suspicions of him were groundless. He continued to hold his office as chief of the Galilean forces, and in due time his unfitness brought about its sad, though inevitable, results.

§ 40.

The War in Galilee.

The emperor Nero received news of the Hebrews' rebellion during a pleasant sojourn in Greece where he was attending the Olympic Games and presiding over the brilliant festivities with which such occasions were always celebrated. He instantly sent the ablest of his generals to Judea to put down the revolution, and at the beginning of the year 67 A. D., Vespasian concentrated on the Judean borders, all the Roman troops stationed in the east. The army consisted of 60,000 men. Agrippa II, as a vassal of the empire, with his auxiliary forces, added the weight of his arms to those of Rome, and thus a descendant of the Kings of Judea

came to fight against his own kith and kin. His beautiful sister, Berenice, was also in the Roman camp with him, and there she made the acquaintance of Vespasian's son Titus, who was in command of several regiments. He was enchanted by her loveliness and the relations between the two, the Hebrew princess and the man who was destined to strike the final blow at the kingdom of Judea, became very intimate.

Vespasian began by invading Galilee with picked troops, since that city had to be conquered before he could advance upon the capital. The Galileans, who had never in their lives beheld so great an army, were filled with terror, and the first to allow his fear to overwhelm him was the leader of the defending army, Joseph-ben-Mattathias. He fell back in the direction of Tiberias, leaving and allowing the enemy to seize one city after another, unmolested by him, and though the inhabitants themselves put up a desperate resistance, they could not hope to repel the attacks of Vespasian's innumerable hordes. Only the town of Jotapata, whose natural fortifications Joseph had strengthened until they were all but impregnable, succeeded in arresting temporarily the Romans' progress. This city was situated upon a rocky height, with deep ravines on every side, and the only possible approach to it was protected by towers and trenches. Joseph shut

himself up in his fortress with a considerable portion of his army, while Vespasian surrounded it with his troops and personally directed the siege.

The Romans kept up an incessant shower of arrows, stones and blocks wrapped in combustible materials; but the besieged army made a good many successful sorties, driving away several detachments and destroying their engines of war. When the Romans moved their battering-rams nearer the fortress, the beleaguered Hebrews lowered straw-filled sacks against the wall to break the force of the blows, pelting the Romans with firebrands the while and pouring brimstone and boiling tar upon them. All their efforts were in vain however. The city was in dire need of water, and one night Hebrew sentinels, weakened by thirst, slept at their posts upon the city walls. An enemy spy reported this, and quietly the Romans stole upon the fortress, scaling the walls, and before the guards, startled into wakefulness, had time to realize what had happened, Jotapata was in the hands of the enemy. (June, A. D. 67.) The Roman soldiers whom the prolonged siege had exasperated to unbridled violence, started a frightful massacre in the city. Thousands of Hebrews perished and multitudes of women and children were taken prisoners and sold into slavery. Joseph, the chief, hid for several days

in a cave with forty others, and when their hiding-place was discovered, his companions decided to stab each other rather than surrender to the enemy. But Joseph left the cave and declared his submission before Vespasian. At first the Roman general had Joseph kept strictly under guard, but later on treated him well, allowing him to remain as a member of his retinue. The news of the fall of Jotapata brought great sorrow to the people of Jerusalem, and when they heard that Joseph had surrendered, they cursed him for a coward and a traitor. This conquest left the rest of Galilee an easy prey to Vespasian, and before moving further towards the capital, he let his weary soldiers rest in winter quarters near Caesarea-by-the-Sea.

§ 41.

The Siege of Jerusalem.

Those who had survived the massacre in Galilee flocked, with zealots from other parts of the country, to Jerusalem, and the capital soon became a military camp where all the bravest defenders of their country assembled. At that time Jerusalem was a large, and beautiful city, fortified on three sides by steep rocks and deep precipices and a rampart besides. Its only open side was protected by a triple stone wall surmounted by many towers. Mount Moriah, upon

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which the temple stood, was an inaccessible fortress. The stronghold was clearly able to withstand a very long siege, and so it might have done, but for the incessant strife that raged amongst the various factions within. The war-like zealots believed it necessary to the successful outcome of the war to deprive of office all those pacifists who were of the opinion that the struggle against Rome had been far better never attempted. The members of the Sanhedrin, as well as ordinary citizens, numbered many such, and soon they were in full fight against the overbearing pro-war party. The zealots possessed themselves of the fortified temple, thinking thereby to make themselves masters of the city, and shut themselves up inside it. The pacifists, belonging to the party of Anan, the High Priest, surrounded the court of the temple and kept the others in a state of siege. Finally, followers of the zealot leaders admitted a band of Edomites into the city under cover of night, and with their help, made an attack upon the Sanhedrin. The most illustrious members of the council were killed in the fray, among them the head men of the city, Joseph-ben-Gorion and the High Priest, Anan, and many of the pacifists were put to death. The zealots forbade any citizen to leave the city under penalty of death. After this conquest, the zealots themselves divided into

two parties; the extremists and the moderates. The latter elected as their chief Eleasor-ben-Simon, while the extremists of Galilee chose the valiant Simon-bar-Giora. Instead of uniting in the struggle against the common enemy, the two factions fought violently amongst themselves, and during these clashes, great stores of grain which wealthy citizens had put by to feed the people during the anticipated siege, were totally destroyed. Thus the would-be defenders of their country, instead of putting off the evil day of its downfall as long as possible, hastened it by their strife and dissensions.

Great changes were meanwhile taking place in Rome. The blood-thirsty emperor had died and his eminent generals were engaged in a struggle for the throne. At the end of two turbulent years, Vespasian, who was just then preparing to besiege Jerusalem, was elected emperor. (69 A. D.) He returned to Rome, leaving his son Titus at the head of the army in Judea.

During the Passover holidays of the year 70, Titus marched upon Jerusalem. At the approach of the formidable Roman legions, with their terrifying implements for laying siege to the capital, the rival parties ceased their quarreling and united for the defence of the holy city and the temple. But it was too late. Titus' demand that the city be surrendered voluntarily

was received with defiance, and the siege began.

Hebrew soldiers made many a heroic sortie from the city into the enemy's camp, leaving great destruction behind them, and once they almost captured Titus himself, but he managed to effect a hair's-breadth escape. This frequent harrying by the Hebrews impeded the Romans in moving their great battering-rams, but at length after many losses, they succeeded in surrounding the city with high ramparts upon which they mounted arrow-flinging machines. These missiles rained into the beleaguered capital, spreading death and terror. And at last, the huge battering-rams were moved over to the city walls which began to give way under the terrific blows. Under the leadership of Johanan of Gischala, the Hebrews demolished the Roman structures; they slew smaller detachments of the enemy army and bore themselves throughout with incomparable bravery. But they were quite unable to match either the military strategem or the superior strength of the Romans. In May the outer wall of the city yielded, and after a sanguinary battle, which lasted five days, the second, or inner wall gave way also.

But the Romans' most difficult task was still to come. They had yet to take the strongly fortified Upper City and Temple Hill. Titus ordered those two points to be surrounded with

a quadruple row of earthworks upon which the implements of the siege were to be mounted. Four legions worked unremittingly on these structures and the besieged, on their side, were far from idle. The defence of the Upper City was in charge of Simon-bar-Giora, while Johannan of Gischala defended the Temple Hill. They both kept up a continuous hail of arrows upon the Romans who were thus prevented from getting on with their building. Titus again attempted to persuade the heroic defenders to surrender the city and sent Josephus Flavius, the former chief of Galilee, to bring them to reason. Joseph stood upon the high rampart and made a speech to the Hebrews in which he tried to prevail upon them to submit to the Roman general and save the temple at least from destruction. But the Hebrews did not heed Joseph, whom they regarded as traitor and a spy; they continued their resistance, determined either to conquer or to perish in the attempt.

§ 42.

The Destruction of Jerusalem—70 A. D.

Terrible famine had meanwhile been spreading in the city. The stores of grain had long been exhausted; the rich were paying with their costliest treasures and the poor with their last wordly goods for a mere crust of bread. Heart-

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rending stories of this time of suffering have been handed down to the present generation in the chronicles of the times. Martha, the rich widow of the High Priest, Joshua-ben-Gamala, who had never walked to the temple except over priceless carpets every step of the way, was obliged to still the torture of hunger with offal she picked up in the streets. Another woman of great wealth was reduced by the famine to such a state that she stabbed her own child to death in her madness, and ate it. The streets were covered with corpses and with half-starved men and women who fell to the ground in exhaustion and were unable to rise. It was impossible to bury the dead quickly enough, and corpses lying exposed everywhere polluted the air. Hunger, disease and the enemy's arrows soon began to decimate the ranks of the city's defenders, but the courage of the survivors never failed; even the Romans, war-hardened as they were, could not but admire and wonder at their doggedness and bravery.

The day came when the enemy machines were trained upon the temple fortifications, and from their main tower, "Antony's tower" as it was called, the Romans at last saw the massive protecting walls round the temple court. Since it was impossible to attempt the destruction of those mighty walls with battering-rams, Titus ordered the outer gate, from which a row of

pillars stretched to the temple, to be set on fire. Then the vast courtyard became the scene of a terrible battle in which the Hebrew warriors fought like lions, and for every step nearer the holy shrine, the enemy paid in rivers of blood. Suddenly one of the Roman soldiers seized a fire-brand and threw it through an open window into the temple. The woodwork inside at once caught fire and soon the whole edifice was in flames. Hastening to the scene of the conflagration, Titus made frenzied efforts to have the fire put out and save the magnificent building, but his shouted orders could not be heard above the deafening roar that arose from the collapsing temple, and the despairing wails of the vanquished Hebrews and the clash of arms. The exasperated Romans rushed into such chambers of the temple as the flames had not yet reached, trying to make away with some of the treasures, but they gained their objective only over the dead bodies of the Hebrew soldiers who, amidst the blackened ruins of their holy place, maintained their hopeless resistance to the last. Unbridled passions were let loose and the conquerors gave free reign to their fury. Old men, women and children were slain wantonly and without mercy; many Hebrews met their death in the flames into which they hurled themselves in their despair. The temple, Judea's pride and glory, was reduced

to a heap of ashes, having been destroyed on the same days of Ab, the ninth and tenth, as the first temple which Solomon had built and Nebuchadnezzar destroyed many years before.

Of all the ritual accessories, only the candelabra, a table holding sacraments, and a censer of pure gold, were saved and Titus ordered these to be taken away and saved as trophies.

In spite of this tragic débacle, the conquest of Jerusalem was not yet, however, at an end. In one quarter of the capital called "the Upper City," Johannan of Gischala and Simon-bar-Giora had fortified themselves with the scanty remnants of their troops. They offered to surrender their stronghold to Titus if he would allow them to leave fully armed, but Titus refused and the battle began anew. The Upper City was taken by the Romans and destroyed. Johannon and Simon, driven by hunger out of the underground chamber in which they had hidden themselves, were captured and taken to Rome in chains.

§ 43.

The Downfall of Judea.

The destruction of Jerusalem brought about the final downfall of Judea. This struggle of a small kingdom against the mightiest empire of the world, rare in the annals of history, took fabulous toll of human life; nearly a million

Hebrews perished in the war (66-70 C. E.) and nearly one hundred thousand were taken prisoners. Some of these were executed and others condemned to hard labor or sold into slavery in the markets of Asia and Africa. The strongest and handsomest were kept as gladiators in the Roman circuses or to accompany Titus on his triumphal entry into Rome. To celebrate his father's and brother's birthdays in Berith and Caesarea, the conqueror held public games and gladiatorial exhibitions in which many Hebrew prisoners, were thrown to wild beasts to be torn to pieces for the amusement of the spectators. And when, later Titus returned to Rome with vast quantities of booty and a horde of captives, Vespasian arranged a triumphal march through the capital in his honor. Loaded with chains, the prisoners preceded the emperor and his two sons, Titus and Domitian; the sacred vessels stolen from the temple were also carried in the procession. When they came to the temple of Jupiter, Simon-bar-Giora was led out of the crowd of prisoners, and made to walk apart. A noose was cast about his neck; he was dragged into the prison near the forum, and there put to death. The news of the execution was announced in the public forum and the people received it with joyful acclamation. The other leader, Johannan of Gischala, was sentenced to imprisonment for life. In com-

memoration of the victory, special coins were struck bearing the figure of a woman in chains and the inscription "Conquered Judea" (*Judea capta*).

After the destruction of Jerusalem, only three fortresses remained in Judea. Masada, near the Dead Sea, the strongest of these, fell into the hands of the Romans three years after Titus' departure from Judea. (73 C. E.) Here, too, the defenders put up the most valiant resistance, fighting to their last drop of blood to save this last remnant of their homeland. There were at least a thousand of them in the fortress, and when they realized their position was hopeless they slew first their wives and children and then themselves, so that none might fall alive into the hands of the enemy. The Romans, entering the citadel, found only two women and five children living.

Thus the emperors became possessed of the whole of Judea. The land was either given to Roman soldiers, who settled in the conquered province, or sold to other heathens; one small section only was set apart for the Hebrew survivors. The half-shekel tax formerly paid by every Hebrew for the maintenance of the temple of Jerusalem was now made payable to the temple of Jupiter Capitoline in Rome.

Such members of the zealot party who managed to escape from Judea found shelter in

Egypt, where they endeavoured to impregnate their fellow-Hebrews with their own undying hatred for the Romans and incite them to rebellion. But this attempt of the last of the zealots proved unsuccessful; the revolt was instantly suppressed by Vespasian, who further ordered the destruction of the temple of Onias in Egypt, which deprived the Hebrews of their last shrine. (73 A. D.)

Agrippa II, the son of Judea's last king, kept his small Syrian principality and divided his time between Rome and his own narrow dominions. Vespasian rewarded him liberally for his loyalty to the empire and for his participation in the conquest of Galilee. His sister, Berenice, lived in Titus' palace in Rome, but, contrary to her expectations, the Roman general did not marry her, fearing the people's displeasure if he were to make a Hebrew woman his wife. Greatly disappointed, Berenice returned to Palestine.

Another Hebrew, whose unsuccessful generalship during the Galilean wars had brought him no honor, afterwards became his people's eloquent historian, spending the remainder of his days at the court of Rome. This was Josephben-Mattathias, and Vespasian, as a special mark of royal favor, bestowed upon him his own patronymic, calling him Flavius. He was given, besides one of the emperor's man-

sions in Rome, wide estates in Judea, and for nearly twenty years Joseph lived in the capital, writing his famous works on the history of the Hebrew people. He described in the minutest detail the wars in which he had been participant or onlooker. His "Wars of the Jews" was written originally in Hebrew, but has survived only in a Greek translation. Josephus Flavius also wrote in Greek a book in twenty volumes called "Antiquities of the Jews," which contains the history of the Hebrews from their earliest beginning down to the period of the Roman-Hebrew wars. His histories are remarkable for their extraordinary literary value and for the author's vivid narrative style. As historian, however, he is not always impartial in his explanations of contemporary events; he turns a very unfavorable light, for instance, upon the whole of the zealot party without distinction, and often justifies the Romans at the Hebrews' expense.

Many other books written in Greek by Hebrew authors, have also come down to us. These writers lived either in Judea or in Egypt during the two hundred years preceding the fall of the kingdom. Their works exist in a collective form under the title of the "Apocrypha" and include: 1. The Book of the Asmoneans, telling of the wars of freedom against the domination of Syria; 2. The Parables (or Prov-

erbs) of Joshua-ben-Sirach; 3. The Book of Judith, celebrating the heroism of the Jewess who killed Holofernes, the Babylonian general, thereby saving her people from slavery; 4. and 5. Morality stories of Tobias and Susanna; 6. The Wisdom of Solomon; and several more besides. Some of these books were originally written in Hebrew, but in after years the originals were lost so that only their Greek translations remained.

The spirit of some of the books of the Apocrypha, the first part of "The Asmoneans," for example, and the "Proverbs" of Joshua-ben-Sirach, bear an intimate resemblance to the Biblical writings, but on account of their more recent date, the Hebrew religious teachers would not include them in the Scriptures.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM TO THE REBELLION OF BAR-KOCHBA.

(70-138 C. E.)

§ 44.

Johannan-ben-Zaccai.



FOR a long time before the Kingdom of Judea finally passed out of existence, and while the struggle for independence against Rome was still going on, the spiritual leaders of the people had had the vision to foresee their country's impending destruction. But they did not therefore lose courage, for their faith was strong that the Hebrews, even though deprived of a kingdom of their own, would not perish. They knew that the real strength of the nation lay not in its government nor in its army, but in the completeness of its spiritual unity of which the base is community of sentiment, religion and general mode of life. These leaders accordingly spent all their efforts to keep alive the people's religious and national ardor. Amongst them was a certain teacher

named **Johannan-ben-Zaccai**, one of the most influential members of the Sanhedrin, and head of the "**Hillel School**," which represented the pacifist party. He was one of the first to foresee how inevitable was the ultimate downfall of Judea, and he set about preparing a refuge for the people's spiritual guides in case of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Shortly before the siege of the capital, when the warlike zealots had locked the city gates so that no one might leave, Johannan and his disciples succeeded in escaping by means of a ruse. The disciples dressed the aged teacher in a shroud and laid him in a coffin which they then carried outside the city ostensibly for burial. Once beyond the city walls, Johannan went before the Roman general **Vespasian**, and said to him: "Let me settle in **Jamnia** (which was near **Jaffe**) with my disciples and establish my school there." The Hebrew teacher had always spoken in favor of peace with Rome and was therefore cordially received by **Vespasian**, and his request was granted.

Soon after they had settled in **Jamnia**, the terrible news of the sack of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple reached Johannan and his pupils. They went into long mourning for the calamity which had overtaken their country.

Johannan's disciples all believed that with the destruction of the temple, which deprived the

Hebrews of the only place where they could conduct the sacrificial rites of their religion, the religion itself would soon disappear. But Johannan dispelled their fears and bade them remember the words of the prophets, that true service to God consists, not in sacrifice but in piety, and good deeds. "Virtue pleases the Lord better than sacrifices," he would say, quoting the Scriptures, "and though in former times the services in the temple of Jerusalem united all the Hebrews, they must learn to keep together now by observing the true religion and obeying the divine law." Johannan's school in Jamnia was established for the purpose of studying the laws of Judaism, and a new Sanhedrin was formed in the city to see that the laws were duly carried out. The Jamnia Sanhedrin introduced a number of reforms designed to establish better order in the religious affairs of the Hebrews. They devised new methods of conducting their religious services from which the sacrificial ritual was necessarily omitted, but in commemoration of the past, certain of the temple rites were continued, such as the blessing of the people by the descendants of the priests (cohanim), the blowing of the horns and the carrying of palm leaves during the autumn holidays.

Johannan-ben-Zaccai did not live to direct the religious affairs of the people very long, being

already an aged man when Jerusalem was destroyed, in fact, he survived the disaster only a few years. (80 C. E.) Before his death he blessed his disciples and said to them: "Let the fear of God (moral discipline) influence your actions no less than the fear of man (social discipline)."

§ 45.

Patriarch Gamaliel II.

After Johannan-ben-Zaccai, Gamaliel II, the son of Simon II, last chief of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, became the chief of the council in Jamnia, his father having perished during the siege of the capital. Johannan had taken the young Gamaliel under his care and brought him up in Jamnia, training him as his future heir. After the death of his teacher and guardian, Gamaliel succeeded to the office of president of the Sanhedrin which had formerly been hereditary in the family of Hillel. The Roman authorities confirmed Gamaliel's right to the presidency and granted him the title of "patriarch," i. e., elder or chief, of the Hebrews of Palestine. Young Gamaliel proved to be not only a distinguished scholar but an able ruler as well. Besides a wide knowledge of the Hebrew law, he was perfectly familiar with the Greek and Latin languages which were essential to him in

his relations with the Roman procurators and other officials.

Meanwhile Titus had been succeeded by his brother Domitian. (81-96 C. E.) This emperor, a very cruel man whom even the Romans hated, treated the Hebrews with great hostility and throughout his reign the Roman officials in Judea oppressed the unfortunate people and burdened them with heavy taxes. The religion of Israel was facing the dangerous competition of the new Christian teachings which many sects were now beginning to adopt. In order to strengthen the spiritual unity of the people, Gamaliel decided to broaden the legislative functions of the Sanhedrin, but this was a very difficult task. Some of the pupils of Johannan's school became great teachers of religion, notably Joshua-ben-Hanania and Eleazar-ben-Hyrcan who afterwards founded schools of their own in separate cities. Each school interpreted the laws and legends of Judaism after its own fashion and the old disputes between the followers of Hillel and Shamai were revived. To put an end to these disputes between the teachers, the Patriarch Gamaliel invested the Sanhedrin with the new power of deciding by a majority vote which interpretation of the law was correct. Teachers who refused to abide by the decisions of the Sanhedrin Gamaliel punished with "excommunication," i. e., temporary ostra-

cism from the synagogue and from society. Even Eleazar-ben-Hyrcau, a scholar greatly respected by the people, was not exempt from this punishment when he refused to submit to the Sanhedrin's decision. These severe rules of Gamaliel's devising aroused intense indignation amongst the teachers. They formed an opposition party and elected a new president for the Sanhedrin, a young scholar named Eleazar-ben-Azariah. Gamaliel gave up his position without a word of protest and continued to serve in the council as an ordinary member. By which he made it clear to all that his severity had not been prompted by any personal ambition, but by an earnest desire to check the pernicious influence of religious quarrels. Then Gamaliel was re-elected president of the Sanhedrin and Eleazar-ben-Azariah became his assistant.

Gamaliel II arranged the order and matter of the three daily prayers, those which every Hebrew recited every day in the morning, the afternoon and the evening. At his suggestion, the main prayer of the day, which consisted of "eighteen blessings," was considerably amplified by the addition of supplications not only for the individual's own well-being but for the restoration of Jerusalem and of the Kingdom of Judea. In order that the dispersed Hebrews might know the dates of the yearly holidays,

the Sanhedrin of Jamnia always sent out special messengers to notify the distant communities. And to avoid mistake, the Hebrews outside of Palestine celebrated the holidays of Passover, Shebuoeth and Rosh-Hashona for two days instead of one, thus establishing the custom of "second days," an observance which still survives.

The Christian religion was making rapid progress amongst the heathens; but there were many who preferred to embrace Judaism. Amongst the converts were several near kinsmen of the Emperor Domitian, and their adoption of the faith of Israel fanned the cruel ruler's hatred of the Hebrews to the utmost violence. Aquila, an educated Greek from Asia Minor, was one of the converts and he became a very close friend of the Patriarch Gamaliel and of the other teachers under whose supervision he compiled a literal Greek translation of the Bible to replace the Septuagint, that old and greatly distorted version made by the "seventy interpreters" long ago. Aquila's translation did not, however, survive the ages; the only trace of it was an Aramean translation of the Pentateuch, written in the style of Aquila and called "Targum Onkelos," which means Aquila's translation."

§ 46.

Disturbances During the Reign of Trajan and Hadrian.

Three years after Domitian's death, Trajan became emperor of Rome. (98 C. E.) He engaged in long wars with the Parthians, who occupied the lands which once had been Babylon and Persia. A great many Hebrews also lived in those countries, and in some of the larger cities, like Nisibin and Nahardea, they had wealthy and flourishing communities. When the Babylonian Hebrews heard of the approach of Trajan's troops, they feared that the cruel Romans would deprive them of their freedom as they had done to their brethren of Palestine. They therefore took up arms against the invaders. (115 C. E.) Trajan suppressed this rebellion but others broke out elsewhere and anti-Roman uprisings took place wherever Hebrews inhabited any of the Roman possessions in Asia and Africa. The Hebrews everywhere hated the Romans as the destroyers of Jerusalem and of the holy temple; they longed for the early advent of a "messiah," i. e., the liberator who, it had been foretold, would gather the scattered nation together once more and take them back to Palestine, there to establish a new, free and powerful kingdom. The Hebrews of Asia Minor, of Egypt and of the island of

Cyprus rose up and killed their heathen oppressors (116 A. D.), and Trajan sent his general, Turbo, to suppress the revolt which he did with extreme cruelty. The Hebrews of Alexandria also suffered; their magnificent synagogue, which had been famous since the days of the Ptolemys, was completely demolished. Palestine also showed signs of unrest and Trajan sent there as procurator, his general Quietus, a callous and heartless man, ready to execute his orders to keep the Hebrews in submission with the greatest brutality. Shortly after this Trajan died and the Emperor Hadrian ascended the throne of Rome. (117 A. D.)

Fearing that an uprising of the Hebrews might further complicate the disturbed state of affairs in the East, the new emperor acted in a conciliatory spirit. He recalled the cruel Quietus from Palestine and even promised soon to restore the ruined capital and the temple. The Hebrews believed these promises and quieted down. They did not understand the ulterior motive behind Hadrian's promise, which was to rebuild Jerusalem not for the Hebrews but for the heathens. The emperor delayed the fulfilment of his word, and according to the legend, he proposed to build the Hebrews a new temple somewhere else instead of in Jerusalem. Thus disappointed in their hopes, the people again grew restive. An immense armed

crowd collected in Beth-Rimon ready to attack the Romans.

This rebellion would have broken out immediately but for the timely interference of Joshua-ben-Hanania, who had become chief of the Sanhedrin upon the death of Gamaliel. He realized that an uprising would only bring fresh disasters upon the Hebrews and he hastened to Beth-Rimon where he found the rebels already assembled. He addressed them there and then, relating the following fable:

The lion, King of the beasts, while devouring his prey, once choked on a bone. He began to call for help, promising a great reward to whomever would pull the bone out of his throat. A crane came along, and thrusting his long beak into the lion's mouth, pulled the bone out. Having done this, he demanded the promised reward, but the lion answered scornfully, "Go and be satisfied that you got your head out of my jaws unhurt." Then Joshua added: "We, Hebrews, must likewise be content that, living under Roman domination, we have not yet been exterminated." The people saw that he was right and returned to their homes.

§ 47.

Rabbi Akiba.

After the death of the peace-loving Joshua, another great religious teacher, one Akiba-ben-

Joseph, became the most influential man among the Hebrews, but unlike his predecessor, he tried to incite the people to open rebellion against Rome. The life of this remarkable man was full of striking incidents. In his youth Akiba had been very poor, and had worked in Jerusalem as a shepherd for a rich man, whose name was Kalba-Sabua. Rachel, one of this rich man's daughters, fell in love with the young shepherd and consented to become his wife, but on one condition only, that he devote himself to study for the rest of his life. Rachel's father was so bitterly opposed to this marriage that he drove his daughter out of his house and so she lived with her husband, enduring the sorest privations. Akiba applied himself diligently to study, and, parting from his beloved wife, went from town to town, learning the law in various schools. While he wandered thus, his wife lived in such want that she was even compelled to cut off her abundant tresses and sell them for bread. Nevertheless, she waited patiently for her husband's return, never doubting that he would succeed. And after many years Akiba, who had meanwhile become famous as a great scholar, did indeed return to her, followed by a number of disciples. The faithful Rachel received him with intense joy and even his father-in-law became reconciled to him.

After Hillel, Akiba was considered the most eminent of the Hebrew religious teachers. It was said of him that "he hung every bough of the Scriptures with clusters of laws," which meant that he made many new deductions and evolved supplementary laws and rules out of the commandments as set forth in the Bible. A great many laws and legends had again been accumulated by word of mouth, and these Akiba collected and classified. This collection was studied in schools and was known as the "Mishna of Rabbi Akiba."

But Akiba was not only a spiritual leader; he desired also to make his influence felt as a statesman; he wanted to fight for the liberation of his people. He hated the Romans as the enemies of the Hebrew nation and it was his lifelong dream to deliver his people from the oppressors' yoke and see Jerusalem and the temple restored.

During the reign of Domitian, Akiba with three other teachers, went to Rome to ask the emperor to repeal certain harsh laws he had made against the Hebrews. The noise of the brilliant and animated city came to them from a distance, and Akiba's fellow-travellers wept, remembering their own Jerusalem deserted and desolate while the enemy's capital prospered and flourished. But Akiba said to them: "Why should you weep? If God gives so many bless-

ings to those who do not need Him, how richly will He in time reward those who do?" Once, together with some friends, he was walking amidst the desolation that had once been Jerusalem, and as they came near Temple Hill they saw a jackal, the beast of the desert, run out of the ruins of the temple. Akiba's companions sobbed aloud, but he, on the contrary smiled. "How can you smile?" they asked him. And he replied: "Since our prophets' predictions that Zion would become a wilderness has come true, then their other prediction that it would be restored will come true also in good time." Belief in the ultimate liberation of the Hebrews never forsook Akiba, and when they grew restive under the rule of Trajan and Hadrian, his hopes were greatly strengthened. He travelled through many cities in Palestine and Asia Minor, inciting the people to rebellion.

§ 48.

The Rebellion of Bar-Kochba.

While preparations for a revolt were being made in Palestine, there appeared in that city a man who was to become the chief of the rebels. This was Simon-bar-Koziba (a native of Koziba) but he had been given the name of Bar-Cocheba (the son of a star), a brave warrior, famous for his rare physical prowess. Akiba, the people's spiritual leader, recognized in him

a born leader of armies, and they decided to join forces for decisive action. Akiba believed that Bar-Cocheba was that very liberator of the Hebrew people of whom a Biblical prophet had said: "And a star of the house of Jacob shall rise," and many of the Hebrews, carried away by their great teacher's enthusiasm, gathered about the newcomer.

Tens of thousands assembled under the banners of the leader, from all the Asiatic provinces of the Roman empire. Bar-Cocheba was very proud of this army and often prayed: "Though Thou wouldst not help us, O Lord, withhold at least Thy help from our enemies, for then we shall surely be victorious." And at first they were. Rufus, the Roman Procurator, with the small garrisons he had considered adequate for the protection of the Palestinian cities, was wholly powerless against the enormous rebel forces. Led by Bar-Cocheba, the Hebrew warriors seized one fortress after another and drove the Romans out of almost all cities of Palestine. Very soon the insurgents were in possession of fifty fortresses and about a thousand towns and villages. (132-133 A. D.) By the time news of the rebellion reached Hadrian, the Romans in Judea had been defeated everywhere, and the reinforcements sent by the emperor to assist Rufus met the same fate. Bar-Cocheba held Judea in his hand and new coins

bearing the conqueror's name were already about to be struck.

The mountain fortress of Bethar near Jerusalem was his chief stronghold. But the emperor, alarmed at last by the Hebrews' successes, had sent Julius Severus, bravest of the Roman generals of his time, to deal with the situation in Palestine. In view of the fact that the Hebrews occupied all the best strategic positions, Severus at first avoided a pitched battle, but every now and then he would attack small detachments of the rebels, defeating them all. Finally he succeeded in forcing them to retreat to Bethar, where Bar-Ccoheba's army was stationed. The Romans besieged Bethar for a whole year, during which the vast hordes of Hebrews defended the small city valiantly, but the besiegers on their side lacked neither courage nor zeal. The Hebrews suffered a keen disappointment in their supposed Messiah who revealed himself at last in his true colors. They found Bar-Cocheba deficient in piety, and more cruel and arbitrary than they could bear. He ordered the execution of every person suspected of sympathy with the Romans and on one occasion killed with his own hands an aged teacher of religion, the pious Eleazar of Modin, on the false and slandering evidence of another man. All through the siege, Eleasar had not ceased to pray to God for the salvation of the

Hebrew army, and the people who believed in the efficacy of his prayers were deeply grieved at his death. At last the resistance of the beleaguered army broke down and the city was taken by Severus. (135 A. D.) A fearful massacre followed the Romans' entry into Bethar, and tens of thousands of Hebrews perished. Bar-Cocheba, their leader, was among the killed, and many of the prisoners were sold into slavery. Thus sadly ended the last struggle of the Hebrew nation for its independence.

§ 49.

Hadrian's Persecutions.

Having suppressed the great rebellion in Palestine, Hadrian began most cruelly to persecute the Hebrews who had survived the war. Like Antiochus Epiphanus, Hadrian was convinced that so long as their religion persisted, the Hebrews would never reconcile themselves to the supremacy of the heathens, and he therefore decided that the religion must be stamped out. He issued an edict forbidding the Hebrews to celebrate their Sabbath or observe other important laws of their faith. They were not allowed to teach their children in schools or to assemble for the reading of their sacred books. Rufus, the procurator, was very strict in the enforcement of these decrees, and thereby earned himself the surname of "the Tyrant." Roman spies

were sent everywhere to search out all Hebrews thought to be observing their religion or studying their laws in secret; they were delivered over to the Roman authorities for punishment, and a great many met the death of martyrs. The religious teachers showed the utmost inflexibility and endurance.

Akiba, the instigator of the rebellion, all his hopes for the immediate restoration of the Kingdom of Judea having vanished, resumed his former activities as a teacher, openly gathering his disciples around him and teaching them the prospects of Judaism, despite the emperor's orders. "Are you not afraid of the authorities?" he was once asked by a friend. And he answered with the following parable:

Once a fox stood on the bank of a stream, watching the agitated behavior of the fish in the water. "From whom are you fleeing?" he asked them. "We are fleeing from the nets spread by men to catch us," they replied. Then the fox said: "Come out upon dry land then, and let us live together as your ancestors lived with ours." But the fish retorted: "You are said to be very clever, fox, but evidently you are nothing of the kind. For if we are afraid of dangers even in the water which is the only place where we can keep alive, how much more should we fear the dry land where we should die immediately."

"It is thus with the Hebrews," continued Akiba. "Just as a fish cannot live out of the water, so it is impossible for us to live without our holy teachings, and though we dwell in great danger while we continue to study our religion, how much greater would our danger be if we were ever to cease doing so?"

Shortly afterwards Akiba was carried off by the Romans to answer for his defiance of the law. He was thrown into prison and Rufus decided to mete out to the Hebrews' spiritual leader a punishment that would be an example and a warning to the rest. He ordered the executioner at the scaffold to tear Akiba's flesh with iron tongs, which fearful torture the old man endured with incredible stoicism; under the executioner's hands, he kept repeating the words: "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, our Lord, is One." Catching sight of his pupils in tears before him, Akiba said to them: "It always made me sad to read the commandment in our Torah: 'Love your Lord with all your heart, all your soul and all your possessions.' For I fulfilled this commandment in two points only; I loved the Lord with all my heart and sacrificed to Him all my possessions but the thought that I could not accomplish the third part and give up my soul for Him always pained me. Now I rejoice that it has been granted to me to do this last duty also." And with a last cry: "Jehovah, is One," the great teacher died.

Akiba was one of ten teachers martyred during Hadrian's reign. His friend, Hanina-ben-Teradyon, was seized holding the scrolls of the Torah in his hands as he taught his pupils how to live in virtue and righteousness, and the Roman soldiers cast him upon a burning wood-pile with the scrolls wound round his body, and they put wet sponges upon his breast so that he might burn slowly. From the midst of the flames, the martyr consoled his weeping daughter, saying: "The one who will pay for this desecration of the holy Torah shall pay for me also."

Having suppressed the rebellion of the Hebrews, Hadrian could at last realize his old ambition to transform Jerusalem into a heathen city. He ordered a new city to be built on the site of the old one and founded a Roman "colony" there. This colony consisted of discharged Roman soldiers and free settlers, Greeks, Romans and Syrians; every nationality in fact was represented there except the Hebrew. The new Jerusalem was named Elias-Capitolinus in honor of the emperor Elias-Hadrian and of Jupiter-Capitolinus. Temple Hill was cleared of the debris which had accumulated there since the days of Titus' siege; by order of the procurator Rufus, whatever of the temple remained standing was pulled down and the ground ploughed so that the very memory of

the Hebrews shrine might be obliterated from the minds of men forever. A temple to Jupiter was built upon the spot where the temple had stood and a statue of Hadrian was set up nearby. Jerusalem had all the appearance of a Grecian city, with its theatres and circuses, its idol-temples and statues of gods. According to a Christian legend, a temple of Venus was built upon the site of Christ's grave. The effigy of a pig stood upon the southern gate on the road to Bethlehem. The Hebrews were forbidden even to appear within the city gates on pain of death.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PATRIARCHS AND SCHOOLS IN PALESTINE UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THE MISHNA.

138-200 A. D.

§ 50.

Rabbi Meir.



THE rebellion of Bar-Cocheba and the persecutions that followed it, completed the ruin of Judea. Such of the population as survived the ravages of the sword or escaped being captured, were wretchedly poor; many fled from the persecutions into other countries, especially to Babylonia, and among the emigrants were a number of teachers who feared to be overtaken by the fate of Akiba and his fellow-martyrs.

The south of Palestine, or Judea proper, which had been the chief theatre of the war, presented a scene of indescribable desolation. A considerable portion of the Hebrew population of southern Judea moved further north to Galilee where the devastation was less hopeless. After the persecutions ceased, some sort of or-

der was restored to the Hebrew communities. The emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161), Hadrian's successor, repealed the latter's inhuman laws against all who professed the faith of Israel and only the edict forbidding them to enter Jerusalem remained in force. Scholars and patriots who had fled from Hadrian's persecutions began to return home, and among them came several of Akiba's disciples. One of these was the famous Rabbi Meir, who was regarded as the great teacher's worthy successor. When the persecutions came to an end, the teachers assembled in the city of Usha for a conference at which it was decided to revive the Sanhedrin and re-open the schools. Simon III, a son of the late Patriarch Gamaliel II, was elected chief of the council and Patriarch of the Palestinian Hebrews. Akiba's disciple Meir became the chief religious teacher.

The word *meir* means "shining," and Rabbi Meir was said by all his contemporaries to be a shining light of learning to the people. Even during Akiba's lifetime Meir had astonished everybody with his vast knowledge and ready wit. He loved discussion and argument upon the most intricate questions of religious law. "Whoever saw Meir in school at any of those debates between scholars, believed him capable of moving mountains," says the chronicle. The teacher's ardor was communicated to his

pupils and an eager audience always thronged Meir's school. In order not to exhaust his pupils with too much complicated discussion on points of scholarship, Meir would often intersperse the debates with interesting tales, parables and fables. Many of the latter he wrote himself, the cunning fox usually playing the principal role. Meir received no remuneration for this work as teacher and earned his livelihood by copying books, for he had a very beautiful handwriting.

His wife, Beruriah, was a woman of great wisdom and learning, and a daughter of the martyr Hanina-ben-Teradyon, whose death is described above. The chronicles tell many stories of her noble and steadfast character. One day, relates the chronicler, it being the Sabbath, Meir was lecturing at his school. His wife stayed at home with their two sons, both of whom were ill of a plague which raged in the city at that time. While the master was still at school both the boys died, but Beruriah, not wishing to destroy her husband's Sabbath rest, covered the bodies with a sheet and went out to meet him as he came home, calm and cheerful to outward appearances but hiding her sorrow in the depths of her heart. The whole day she concealed the dreadful truth from the father and on various pretexts prevented his entering the room where the dead children lay. When evening came and

Meir had read the prayer for the close of the Sabbath (havdala), his wife approached him and said: "Rabbi, I would like to ask you a question. Some time ago someone gave me a certain thing for safekeeping and now he has come back and asks for it. Must I return it to him?"

"Certainly you must," answered Meir. Then Beruriah led her husband to where the dead boys were and lifted the cover from their faces. Meir wept aloud, but his wife said to him: "Rabbi, did you not tell me just now that whoever took anything for safekeeping should return it at the request of the owner? The Lord gave us children; the Lord has taken them away again; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The name of Meir is associated in the legends of the people with the memory of a great and unhappy freethinker of that time, Elisha-ben-Abua. Elisha had originally been a friend of Akiba's and belonged within the circle of the best religious teachers, but as time went on he began to study Greek philosophy and his faith was shaken to its foundations. The people looked upon him as an apostate and called him "*acher*," i. e., different, changed. It was said that he enticed Hebrew children from the religion of their fathers and was friends with the Romans, his people's enemies. His own friends fell away from him; he lost all his pupils. Only Meir, who had once been his pupil, did not desert him;

and when asked why he remained on good terms with such an unbeliever, he would answer: "I found a pomegranate. I ate the fruit and threw away the skin," meaning that he accepted from Elisha such of his ideas as were good and discarded the errors. Meir tried more than once to bring his straying friend back to the path of the true faith, but in vain. One Sabbath, Elisha was going somewhere on horseback and Meir walked beside him listening to his discourses. Suddenly Elisha stopped and said "Go back home, Meir; you have already walked further than is allowed on Saturday." "Then will you not also return, Rabbi?" asked Meir, meaning "return to the path of truth," but the other answered: "No, there is no return for me, for long ago I heard the voice of the Lord saying: Repent, all ye who have strayed, all except Acher, who knew My power yet renounced Me nevertheless."

Another contemporary of Meir's, and a pupil of Akiba's school was Simon-ben-Johai; he too at this period was very active as a teacher. During the persecutions he had been condemned to death for speaking disrespectfully of the Roman government, but he had managed to escape in the nick of time. For several years he had lived hidden in a cave, with water and herbs for all his food. When the persecutions in Judea came to an end, Simon left his hiding-place and set-

tled in Tiberias, where he lived to a great age, prominent among the spiritual leaders of the Palestinian Hebrews. He did not care for the witty discourses which were so popular in Meir's school and always tried to explain in a very simple way the spirit and meaning of all the Biblical laws. The legends of a later generation tell that during his stay in the cave, Simon compiled a mystic holy book (*Zorah*), and became a miracle-worker. To this day his grave near Zephad in Galilee attracts a great many pilgrims.

§ 51.

The Patriarchs Simon II and Jehuda Hanassi.

The new Sanhedrin in Usha, which was established after the unsuccessful rebellion of Bar-Cocheba, was constituted exactly like the earlier one in Jamnia that met after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Its purpose was also to create a code of religious law which should be observed by Hebrew communities in every country, thus safeguarding the people's national unity, however widely the people might be scattered. Patriarch Simon III, like his father, Gamaliel, tried to strengthen the power of the Sanhedrin both in and beyond Palestine.

While Hadrian's armies were engaged in the sack of Palestine, the Hebrews of Babylonia,

had formed their own Sanhedrin, wishing to break away from their Palestinian brethren, but when order had been once more restored, Patriarch Simon III sent envoys to Babylonia requesting the Hebrews there to abolish their Sanhedrin and again recognize the spiritual supremacy of the teachers of Palestine. The envoys reminded the Babylonian council of the words in the Scriptures: "From Zion (Palestine) comes the learning," not, they pointed out, from Babylonia, and at the same time, they indicated the danger to national unity that lay in a division of the spiritual power. The Babylonian Hebrews submitted and again recognized the power of the Sanhedrin at Palestine.

Like his father, Simon wished to set the power of the Patriarch above that of individual religious teachers and as a result, he found himself in frequent conflict with his colleagues. The associates of Simon who often presided over the Sanhedrin in his absence, were the above-mentioned Rabbi Meir and another scholar named Nathan of Babylonia. Simon made a rule that special honors should be rendered him as Patriarch, as distinct from such marks of homage as his associates received. All present were, for example, to rise at his entrance at any gathering, whereas some only were required to do so for the others. Meir and Nathan, who were by far the Patriarch's superiors in learning, took

very great offence at this ruling and agreed between themselves to pose Simon such difficult problems of law at the next meeting of the council that he would not be able to answer them and would thus humiliate himself in the eyes of all the other members; in this way they hoped to deal a blow at the proud Patriarch's prestige. But their revengeful intent led to their temporary suspension from the assembly.

Upon the death of Simon III (170 A. D.) his son Jehuda Hanassi became the Patriarch and chief of the Sanhedrin. The new Patriarch, seventh of the family of Hillel, combined the abilities of a good administrator with very wide learning. He kept up friendly relations with the Roman authorities and successfully protected the interests of his people. According to the legends, he was even a great friend of one of the Antonin emperors, probably the philosopher Marcus Aurelius. Jehudah had inherited the fortune of his wealthy family; he lived like a king, which indeed his position as representative of the Hebrew people before the Roman government necessitated. He commanded the respect of all the religious teachers and members of the Sanhedrin for the office he so admirably filled. In his time, the Sanhedrin almost recovered its former glory and had its full membership of seventy, as in the days of the Jerusalem temple.

The council assembled first in Usha and then in the Galilean cities of Tiberias and Zephora where Jehudah Hanassi lived most of the time. The Patriarch alone had the power to appoint judges and teachers for the various communities, and the admission of teachers to the Sanhedrin depended upon him. Despite his sternness, Jehudah was noted for his kindly and generous character. He devoted a considerable part of his wealth to the support of indigent scholars and students; many schools were maintained by this liberal Patriarch. Even from Babylonia studious youths would come to Palestine where, thanks to the patronage of Jehudah Hanassi, they were able to acquire degrees for scholarship in the law.

§ 52.

The Completion of the Mishnah.

Jehudah's highest merit was that with the assistance of several other men of learning, he collected and completely classified all the oral laws the Hebrew teachers had enunciated as supplements of the written laws of the Bible. The Patriarch feared lest the "oral laws," in descending by word of mouth from one generation to another, be in time forgotten or distorted, and he saw that if they were to be preserved in their integrity, they must be put into written form. This task, scarcely begun at the time of

Akiba and Meir, was diligently carried on and completed during the lifetime of Jehudah Han-assi. All the laws, opinions and legends which had come down through several centuries via the memories of the scholars, were included in a single collection, which was called the "Mishna," i. e., "Secondary Teachings," or "Complement to the Primary Teachings" contained in the 'Torah of Moses. At first the Mishna was simply a text-book for use in the schools and for teachers of the law, but as time passed, it came to be looked upon by the people as a sacred book and the direct continuation of the Torah.

The Mishnah consists of six parts or "Sedarim":

1. Zeriam: a collection of laws concerning the cultivation of the land, the duties of a land-owner, the donations to priests, poor, etc. This part contains also a treatise on prayers and blessings (Cerachoth).

2. Moed: laws pertaining to the Sabbath, holidays and fasts.

3. Noshim: laws concerning marriage, divorce and other domestic matters.

4. Nesikim: a collection of laws and treatises on civil and criminal law; a treatise called "Aboth" is included in this part, containing the wisdom of the "fathers of the synagogue" from the time of the Great Council to Jehudah Han-assi.

5. Kodishim: or the laws of sacrifices and rites in the temple of Jerusalem, also the dietary laws.

6. Tagaroth: or laws concerning cleanliness for priests and laymen.

Each part (*seder*) is divided into treatises, each treatise into chapters, and each chapter into paragraphs, or "Mishnas," properly so-called. The language of the Mishnah is Hebrew but the construction is Aramean and there is an admixture of Greek and Latin terms. The explanations in the Mishnah are very curious: side by side with the actual laws are quoted all kinds of contradictory opinions, which various scholars had expressed about them. It is usually not explained which of these opinions is the correct one, because the book was supposed to be used by scholars and their pupils who were expected to find out the truth for themselves. Consequently innumerable interpretations of the Mishnah sprang up which were later included in the Talmud.

Jehuda Hanassi held the office of Patriarch for about forty years (until 210 A. D.). Before his death he left the succession to his eldest son Gamaliel. When the news that Rabbi Jehudah was dying spread among the people, they hastened in multitudes to Zeporah, anxiously begging for news of his recovery, and when he died no one found courage to tell the agitated

throng. At last, Bar-Kappara, the late Patriarch's faithful disciple, appeared in robes of mourning before the assembled populace and said: "Angels and mortals struggled together for possession of the Ark of the Covenant. The angels won and the Ark was carried away." The people understood the meaning of his parable and loud weeping arose; the sound of their lamentations could be heard all over Zeporah and the suburbs of the city. The road between Zeporah and Beth-Shearim where the Patriarch was to be buried, was crowded with mourners. Memorial orations in praise of the great merits of the teacher who had immortalized the "Oral Teachings" were pronounced in all the synagogues.

After his death, Jehudah was called simply "Rabbi," which means teacher or master, the title only being used without his given name. He was the last of the religious teachers to be numbered amongst the creators of the Mishnah and whose title was "tanaim" (teachers). From Johanan-ben-Zaccai to Jehudah Hanassi, they had numbered about one hundred and twenty. After him, the religious teachers were no longer called "tanaim," but "hamoraim" or "commentators."

CHAPTER IX

THE HEBREWS IN PALESTINE UNTIL THE END OF THE RULE OF THE PATRIARCHS.

200-425 C. E.

§ 53.

The Patriarchs and the First Amoraim.



ONE of the Patriarchs who succeeded Jehudah-Hanassi in Palestine combined as he did administrative ability with great scholarship. Gamaliel III, his son and successor, did not distinguish himself in any way at all and Jehudah II, grandson of the compiler of the Mishnah, occupied the patriarchal office for more than half a century (230-286 C. E.), living the life of a secular prince and maintaining the friendliest relations with the Roman officials.

Alexander Severus, the emperor, treated the Hebrews well and respected their religion. The chambers of his palace contained, side by side with the images of Greek gods and heroes, a statute of Abraham, the progenitor of the Hebrew race, while over the palace entrance he had

engraved the following words of the sage, Hillel: "Do not unto others that which would be unpleasant done unto yourself."

During the patriarchal rule of Jehudah II the Sanhedrin moved from Zeporah to Tiberias, and this beautiful city, situated upon the picturesque shore of Lake Genesareth, became the permanent residence of the Patriarchs and the centre of the intellectual activities of the Palestinian Hebrews. Here also was the highest school of religious law, where all the best teachers were to be found.

The teachers who came after the completion of the Mishnah were called *amoriaim*, i. e., commentators. The first of these was Johannan-ben-Napaha, who in his early youth had sat at the feet of Jehudah Hanassi. Johannan founded a new school in Tiberias to which students came not only from Palestine but even from Babylonia. Their researches were confined to the study of the Mishnah, all the conflicting opinions of the "tanaim," or early teachers, being analyzed, and whichever interpretation was judged correct was adopted definitely by the school. Among the new scholars there were some who looked upon the Mishnah as a second Bible and would not permit any deviation from its precepts. But Johannan was of the opinion that legislation should change and evolve and not remain stationary, so he and his associates,

wrote complementary articles, (*Gemarah*), to the Mishnah which was itself a complement to the Bible. Johannan's chief collaborator in this undertaking was a man named Resh-Lakish. The life of this amorai was a series of adventures. In his boyhood Resh-Lakish had wandered from place to place, suffering all the privations of extreme poverty. At one time he was even forced to abandon his studies and earn his livelihood in a circus as a tamer of wild animals. Then Johannan, who had been his schoolfellow, rescued him from his state of penury and the vagabond life to which it had driven him. Resh-Lakish married Johannan's pretty sister, resumed his studies and soon became known as the wittiest of all the interpreters of the law. Very often he would defeat even his learned brother-in-law in the discussions.

After the death of these two amoraim, about 240 A. D., the schools in Palestine deteriorated. Rab-Ami and Rab-Asi replaced Jehudah and Resh-Lakish as the leaders of the school in Tiberias, but they did not attract as many pupils as their predecessors. A great many scholars left Palestine and went to settle in Babylonia where Hebrew science flourished in numerous academies.

§54

The Christian Emperors of Rome.

During the first three centuries of the Christian era, the Roman emperors remained heathen, and very often indulged in cruel persecution of the Christians. It was not until the beginning of the fourth century that they became affected by this new movement and then Constantine the Great showed some inclination to adopt Christianity. Taking the ill-treated Christians under his protection he at first ceased religious persecutions altogether. In the year 313 he published an edict in Milan proclaiming the equal status of all religions practised in Rome. Later on, however, under the influence of the Christian clergy, Constantine decided to establish Christianity as the state religion and reduce the others to a subordinate position. Thereupon persecutions began again and the Hebrews were forbidden to preach Judaism to heathens or Christians; their civil rights were restricted and special and burdensome taxes were laid upon them. In the year 325 Constantine summoned a great ecclesiastical council at Nicaea in Asia Minor at which the date of the Christian Easter was rearranged so as not to coincide with the Hebrews', and from that time forth, the two religions followed different paths, ever di-

verging more widely from each other, until the adherents of each lost whatever sentiments and characteristics they had in the beginning held in common.

During the reign of the Emperor Constantius, Constantine's successor, marriages between Hebrews and Christians were prohibited. The former were not allowed to study their laws in the synagogues and many teachers were therefore compelled to leave Palestine and go to Babylonia to live. In certain cities of Palestine, Ziporah, Tiberias and Lidda, the exasperated Hebrews rebelled against these acts of oppression and attacked the Roman soldiers stationed there, but Ursicinus, the general, suppressed the uprising with extreme brutality (352 A. D.).

§ 55.

Emperor Julian and Patriarch Hillel II.

The hopes of the Hebrews for better times revived during the reign of Constantine's nephew Julian, called the "Apostate" by the Christians, because in his youth he had renounced Christianity and had meant to restore the heathen religion and Greek learning when he became Emperor. This he did, and being himself a man of education, he refrained from oppressing the Christians whom he prohibited from ill-treating in their turn the adherents of other faiths. The new emperor was especially

sympathetic towards the Hebrews, who had suffered so undeservedly at the hands of his predecessors. He restored all their civil rights and abolished the special taxes. In a message to the Hebrew communities Julian moreover announced that he intended to rebuild the holy city of Jerusalem for them at his own expense (362 A. D.). In this message the emperor addressed the Patriarch Hillel II respectfully as his "brother." Julian did not fail in his promise; he sent one of his officials to Palestine with instructions to prepare everything for the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem. The building materials were collected, workmen hired and the clearing away of the old debris which obstructed the streets of the holy city begun; but without warning a disaster occurred which put an end to the work. The workmen had no sooner begun their excavations on the site of the old Jerusalem temple in order to lay the foundations for the new one than flames arose from the deep holes they had dug in the earth and several of them were burned to death. The people read a dire omen in this accident and the project of rebuilding was definitely abandoned. Shortly afterwards the news reached Jerusalem that the emperor Julian had fallen in the war with the Persians (363 A. D.) and the last hopes of the Hebrews for the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple died with him.

During the reign of the first Christian emperors of Rome, the patriarch of the Palestinian Hebrews was Hillel II. Owing to persecutions of non-Christians, many Hebrews left Palestine and emigrated to Babylonia and other Persian territories, so that the power of the Patriarch and the Sanhedrin rapidly decreased. In former times the Sanhedrin in Palestine had made monthly observations of the phases of the moon (the Hebrews reckon their months and years according to the moon and not according to the sun) and notified the communities of Palestine and neighboring countries by messenger, on which day of the following month the respective holidays would fall. But with only a few Hebrews remaining in Palestine, all the rest having scattered over various countries, this arrangement was no longer practicable. So Patriarch Hillel II compiled the first Hebrew calendar with the help of which the Hebrews of all countries could calculate the days of every month and the dates of the holidays, without waiting to be notified by the Palestinian Sanhedrin (359 A. D.). The publication of this calendar broke the last ties which bound the Hebrews dispersed over Western Asia to the religious teachers in the Holy Land.

§ 56.

The Last Patriarchs and the Talmud of Jerusalem.

The Roman emperors after Julian established the Christian religion firmly throughout their dominions, and the Christian clergy, finding the supreme power in their hands, began to oppress all dissenters, more especially the Hebrews. Roused by the exhortations of their priests, the Christian populace often attacked and destroyed the synagogues. Now and then the Emperor Theodosius the Great had protected the Hebrews against their enemies' violence, but after his death in 395 A. D., when the Roman Empire finally split into its Eastern and Western parts, Byzantium with Constantinople for its capital, and Italy with Rome, there was no one left to save the persecuted people. The Byzantine emperors were completely under the domination of bishops and other dignitaries of the church, who regarded the Hebrews as godless unbelievers. Theodosius II (408-450 A. D.), acting on the advice of these ecclesiastics, forbade the Hebrews to build any new synagogues, and debarred them from public office and from employing Christian servants in their households.

Gamaliel VI, the last Hebrew Patriarch in Palestine, lived in the reign of this emperor who in the beginning had approved Gamaliel's ap-

pointment, even to the extent of conferring upon him the title of "Prefect (chief) of the Hebrews." But when Gamaliel took it upon himself to break the imperial law depriving the Hebrews of their rights, and gave them leave to build new synagogues if they needed them, Theodosius dismissed him from his honorary office and later on abolished the patriarchate in Palestine altogether (about 425 A. D.). Thus the power of the Patriarchs in Palestine, all members of the great Hillel's family, came to an end after more than three centuries. The title was transferred to the Bishop of Jerusalem, the highest dignitary of the Byzantine Church.

Contemporary with these events was the decline of the Palestinian schools. Only a very few teachers, successors of the first amoraim, remained behind and they decided before the necessity for emigration should overtake them too, to collect and set down in writing all the commentaries, interpretations and supplements to the Mishnah which had been compiled in the schools that had moved away, in order that this legacy of learning might not be lost and forgotten. This collection they added to the Mishnah under the title of the "Palestinian Gemarah" (the word "Gemarah" means supplement, teachings.) The two together were called the "Talmud" (teachings). The Talmud as compiled in Palestine was called the Jerusalem Talmud to dis-

tinguish it from the later, or Babylonian Talmud. The period of its completion coincided approximately with the epoch of the last Patriarchs.

CHAPTER X.

THE HEBREWS IN BABYLONIA UP TO THE COMPLETION OF THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD.

200-500 A. D.

§ 57.

The Babylonian Hebrews Under Neo-Persian Domination.



HERE had been Hebrews in Babylonia since the days of antiquity, for when the "Babylonian captivity" came to an end with the accession of Cyrus to the imperial throne, not all the exiles returned to Judea. Many remained in Babylonia and lived there in communities apart from the heathen natives with whom they did not intermix. While the temple of Jerusalem still existed, the Babylonian Hebrews kept in constant touch with their co-religionists in Palestine, sending donations to the temple, and even travelling to Jerusalem in order to worship their God on important holidays in the holy city. After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the bonds between the Hebrews of

Babylonia and those of Palestine still held because all deferred to the spiritual supremacy of the Sanhedrin and recognized the superiority of the great teachers of the Palestinian schools. During the lifetime of the Patriarch Jehudah-Hanassi, many young men came to Palestine from Babylonia to study in the higher schools, but after his death, when the activity of both the patriarchs and the Sanhedrin began to decline in the Holy Land, the desire for an independent spiritual life stirred in the Babylonian Hebrews.

The persecutions ordered by the Christian emperors of Rome drove many Palestinian Hebrews to Babylonia where the communities consequently increased tremendously, and acquired the power which had formerly belonged to the Palestinians.

When the domination of the ancient Persians (who had conquered Babylonia in the remote days of Cyrus) came to an end, the country passed into the hands of the warlike Parthians, who ruled over it until the year 226 A. D., when they were ousted in their turn. The Persians revolted against Artbanus IV, the Parthian king, whom they deposed, and elected a king of their own in his stead, a military leader named Ardishir, of the family of Sassanids. In Western Asia Ardishir founded the powerful Neo-Persian kingdom of which Babylonia became a province, and at first the change was the cause of

much distress to the Hebrews there. For the new king restored the ancient Persian religion of fire-worship, and the priests, or magi, began to oppress the adherents of all other faiths. The Hebrews were forbidden to light fires in their homes on Persian holidays when the heathens were worshipping Ormuzd, their god of light. These persecutions did not last long, however. Aedashir's successor, the warlike King Shabur I (241-272 C. E.), restored to the Hebrews their freedom of religion and the privilege of self-government, and under this ruler and his successors, they lived in undisturbed prosperity and peace.

The largest and richest communities were those of Nahardea, Sura, Pumbadita and Mahuza. Head over all of them was a chief who bore the title of "resh-haluta" or "exilarch," which means, the chief of the exiles. The exilarchs, like the patriarchs of Palestine, were descendants of King David, and the title descended from father to son. The exilarch was the supreme judge and ruler of the Babylonian Hebrews; he was responsible to the Persian kings for his people's taxes which he collected through officials he employed for the purpose; in all cities where Hebrews lived he appointed judges to settle disputes and chiefs to preserve order. The exilarchs lived like princes, surrounded by a court of minor officials and main-

taining a great retinue of servants. The appointment of the exilarch was in each case ratified by the Persian king and the holder of this office ranked as one of the highest dignitaries of the Persian empire. Thus the Hebrews in Babylonia were an autonomous and free people, living according to their own laws as of yore in their own country, and the liberty they thus enjoyed lent a powerful stimulus to their intellectual and social activity.

§ 58.

Rab and Samuel.

The first important Hebrew schools in Babylonia were founded shortly after the Mishnah was completed, and two men, Abba Areca, later called Rab, and Samuel Jarchinai, are generally considered to have been their founders. These scholars had left Babylonia in their youth and gone to Palestine to improve their learning in the school of the Patriarch Jehudah Hanassi. Their outstanding talents won for them the highest place among the Patriarch's pupils and they soon received their "rabbi's" degrees. They at once returned to Babylonia, having decided to devote their lives to the dissemination of knowledge in the country. Rabbi Abba, or Rab, opened a school in Sura for the study of the laws, modelled on the schools in Palestine (219 A.D.). Students flocked to the new academy

(yeshiba) as many as twelve hundred at one time, and Rab, being a man of wealth, supported a great many whose poverty stood in the way of their ambition to become scholars. In order that married men or others whose occupations left them little leisure for study might not be wholly debarred from acquiring the learning they so desired, great meetings called *kallah* were arranged twice a year, at the end of the winter and at the end of the summer, where, in the presence of the regular students special students could attend a brief review of everything that had been studied in the school during the past six months. Popular lectures were also held before the spring and autumn holidays. So great was the influx of students from all the cities of Babylonia at the time of these lectures that there were not lodgings enough in Sura to accommodate them. Many had to sleep under the open sky on the banks of the lake. Thus was the knowledge spread among all classes of the people.

Rab was famous as a teacher and as the first commentator of the Mishna (*amorai*) in Babylonia. He also wrote hymns or prayers which were read in synagogues. He loved the occupation of husbandry and considered it far superior to commerce. He himself owned wide estates in the suburbs of Sura and personally supervised their cultivation. He gave his son

the following advice. "It is better to own a small plot of land than a large warehouse of merchandise." Rab was the head of his academy for about thirty years, and he died in the year 247 A. D. His activities, which had begun under the Parthians, ended during the reign of the Neo-Persian kings. All the Babylonian Hebrews, when they heard of his death, went into mourning for a whole year.

Samuel, Rab's friend, was head of the academy in Nahardea, his home city. This school had been founded before his time but it was not until he became a teacher there that it acquired its later fame as the highest school of Hebrew science. Unlike all the other teachers of religion, Samuel studied secular sciences besides the law of Israel; mathematics, natural science and medicine found a place in his curriculum. His medical studies led him to the observation that most diseases were due to breathing impure air. His favorite occupation was the study of astronomy in connection with the calculations of the calendar. "The ways of the heavens," he used to say, "are as familiar to me as the streets of Nahardea." Samuel established one rule which was of great importance to the Hebrews living in foreign lands. He proclaimed that the everyday civil laws of all countries applied equally to the natives thereof and to the Hebrews, meaning that the laws by which Hebrews

were governed in their communal affairs were not to clash with those of the countries where they had found refuge. The chronicles say that the Persian King Shabur knew Samuel personally and held him in high esteem.

§ 60.

The Babylonian Amoraim.

Rab and Samuel, who brought the teachings of the Mishnah from Palestine, were the first amoraim in Babylonia. Many famous scholars, graduated from their schools, established schools in their turn, so that the number of men of learning, versed in Hebraic law, multiplied apace. It was a remarkable period. So insatiable became the thirst for knowledge among the Babylonian Hebrews, that learning was valued above everything else. Not the rich man but the scholar commanded the deepest respect of the community, and no Hebrew could pass for educated without a knowledge of the Mishnah and of its many commentaries. Scientific studies which were losing ground in Palestine, spread and flourished in Babylonia. The academies of Sura and Nahardea were at first considered the best, but shortly after Samuel's death a great disaster befell the latter city. Odenath, the prince of Palmyra, who was then making war on Persia, seized and destroyed it

in the year 259 A. D. The academy was temporarily transferred to Pumbadita.

After Rab the chief of the academy in Sura was Huna, who in his youth had been a simple farmer, and who, great scholar though he became, continued to cultivate his own land long after his name became famous. He was often to be seen returning at nightfall from the fields, carrying a shovel and pick over his shoulder. Later on he grew rich and devoted himself to science, acquiring finally the honorary title of head of the Sura academy. Like Rab, Huna supported a great many poor students. The head of the academy in Pumbadita was one Jehudah-ben-Ezekiel, a man of sparkling and ready wit. He arranged frequent debates in his school to stimulate his pupils' intelligence and the scholars of Pumbadita were noted as the wittiest of all debaters. It was said of them that in their discourses they were capable of "making an elephant pass through the eye of a needle." Under the régime of this master, the Pumbadita school held higher rank than the school at Sura. Jehuda was succeeded by Rabba-ben-Nahmeni, a man so vehement in debate that he was called "the mountain-shaker." In his time close on twelve thousand students came regularly to Pumbadita for the pre-holiday debates, but as such huge meetings were forbidden by the Persian government, Rabba found him-

self under arrest and was forced to fly from Pumbadita. He died on his way out of the city. The fame of the school was never greater than when the eminent Abaya was its head. The name of this amorai is often mentioned in the Talmud next to that of Rabba, his associate. (300-350 C. E.) Abaya was the head of the academy in Pumbadita while Rabba held a similar post in the city of Mahuza. The two scholars kept up endless debates on various problems of the law and very often they argued not so much to determine this point or that as to provide mental exercise for their students. Abaya and Rabba spared no efforts to encourage elementary education among the people; they made it their special concern to see that there was a school for children in every city. After Abaya's death most of the students of the Pumbadita academy left to continue their studies under Rabba in Mahuza, and when he died the high standard of his school fell rapidly. Shortly after Rabba's death Mahuza was overtaken by the same disaster as Sura, for during the Emperor Julian's Persian campaign, the city was destroyed by Roman troops.

§ 61.

Rab-Ashi and the Babylonian Gemarah.

Two centuries had passed since Rab and Samuel had transplanted Palestinian culture,

and during that period hundreds of Babylonian amoraim had been engaged upon the analysis and extension of Hebrew religious law, jurisprudence and ethics. The opinions and decisions of these scholars were studied in academies, either verbally or in fragmentary written form. After the Mishnah was completed, a great many new opinions and legends accumulated, which were very difficult to remember, and it became necessary therefore to collect and classify them all and write them down so that they might not be forgotten. This work was begun by the great teacher Rab-Ashi (370-427 A. D.), who was the head of the Sura school. The academy recovered its former status under the leadership of this master, for Rab-Ashi was famous as the greatest amoraï in Babylonia. All the long years of his labors were devoted to one purpose, the collection of stories and legends which had been created in the Babylonian schools as supplements to the Mishnah. This collection of supplements was called the Babylonian Gemarah.

At the great popular meetings in Sura, Rab-Ashi read to his students selections from the Mishnah together with the Gemarah, or interpretations of the amoraim. At the end of thirty years he had expounded the Mishnah from first to last, and the compilation of the Babylonian Talmud was begun. In recogni-

tion of this stupendous labor, the highest scientific degree was conferred on him; he was called "Rabeinu" (our teacher), and in the judgment of posterity he ranked second only to Jeduah Hanassi, the compiler of the Mishnah.

During his administration of the Sura academy, the city of Sura became the seat of the Hebrew exilarchs, who had formerly lived in Nahardea and Pumbadita. After the autumn holidays a great popular feast was held each year in Sura in honor of the exilarch, who was temporal chief over all the Hebrews in Babylonia.

§ 62.

The Completion of the Talmud.

After Rab-Ashi's death, the political status of the Hebrews suffered a change and they lived no longer under the pleasant conditions they had enjoyed until then. In the reign of King Yesdigerd II (438-457), Neo-Persia saw the revival of persecutions directed against all who did not profess the fire-worshipping religion of Zoroaster. The king, instigated by the magi, punished the unbelief of Christians and Hebrews alike, and the latter were even forbidden to observe their Sabbath. Matters grew still worse under the next king, Firuz, who earned the surname of "assassin" for his innumerable cruelties. One day a fight between the Hebrews and the magi broke out in the city of Ispahan and

two of the magi were killed. As a punishment for this, Firuz ordered half of the Hebrew population to be massacred and the children sent to Persian temples to be brought up in the worship of the god of fire.

Huna-Mari, the Babylonian exilarch, and two teachers, were thrown into prison and afterwards executed (470 A. D.). The Hebrew schools throughout the land were closed and the young people forced to embrace the Persian faith. Then the Hebrews began to leave Babylonia in great numbers, many seeking refuge in the adjoining land of Arabia where a warlike tribe of Hebrew nomads had lived from time immemorial. From there some of the fugitives penetrated even into distant India in search of peace and freedom.

At this disastrous epoch, the Hebrews who remained in Babylonia decided to start setting down all the oral teachings which had accumulated since the writing of the Mishnah. The collection of legends begun by Rab-Ashi had been continued after his death by his successors and disciples, and was completed by amoraim towards the end of the fifth century of the Christian era. After the death of the savage Firuz, persecutions of the Hebrews ceased in Babylonia, and the academies in Sura and Pumbedita were re-opened. The head of the former was an amorai named Rabina, called "the

last of the amoraim." Under his guidance the scholars began compiling the Babylonian Gemarah. This work consisted in classifying all the oral commentaries and supplements to the Mishnah which had been already collected, and gathering them into one "code of laws and opinions," which when finished was declared to be "complete and final," i. e., no changes and additions could be made. The Babylonian Gemarah was subdivided according to the order of the sections and articles of the Mishnah, so that every article of the latter was followed by the commentaries and discourses of the Gemarah pertaining to it. The Mishnah and the Babylonian Gemarah together made an immense literary work which was called the "Babylonian Talmud" as distinguished from the less exhaustive Talmud of Jerusalem. Thus, the compiling of the Talmud was begun by Rab-Ashi and finished by Rabina seventy-five years later. Rabina, the last amoraï, died 499 A. D., so that the five-hundredth year of the Christian era is called the year of the completion of the Talmud. This was accomplished four hundred and thirty years after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

§ 63.

The Contents of the Talmud.

The Talmud is a vast collection consisting of more than fifty treatises of varying length,

which usually make from twelve to twenty large printed volumes. It contains the greater part of the creative work of the Hebrews, from the completion of the Bible to the end of the fifth century A. D. It is not the work of one or of several scholars, but a memorial of the spiritual life of the Hebrew people over seven centuries of development. The Talmud differs from any ordinary "code of law" in that besides religious and civil laws it contains also much information upon various branches of human knowledge such as philosophy and ethics. The legislative portions of the Gemarah are written not in the form of definitive decisions but as discourses or disputes between the teachers. This is explained by the fact that the Talmud, as its very name meaning "study" implies, was originally intended both as a code of the law supplementary to the Bible, and as a text-book in which every Hebrew might find material for study and for the development of his mind. The book was supposed at the same time to be a source of universal knowledge and of moral instruction for the people. In addition to religious and civil laws, all kinds of miscellaneous information is found in the Talmud, on astronomy, medicine and the natural sciences, together with moral stories, philosophical essays, historical narratives and folk-lore.

Each book of the Talmud is divided into two consecutive parts, called **Halacha** and **Hagada**. In the **Halacha** the laws of the **Mishnah** are discussed and supplemented, and the connection between them and the laws of the Bible explained. The **Hagada** consists mainly of moral stories, discourses upon various phenomena of life and historical legends. The student of the Talmud, wearied by the many intricate discourses and disputations in the **Halacha**, turns to the **Hagada** where he finds much pleasant and interesting reading. Among beautiful stories and legends he meets many wise maxims embodying the most sublime moral truths enunciated since the creation of the Bible. In later years, when the Talmud came to be studied in schools and synagogues, every man found in it rich food for thought; the scholar lost himself in the witty discourses of the **Halacha** while the ordinary reader enjoyed the instructive stories and sage aphorisms of the **Hagada**.

The development of the ancient Biblical code of laws was completed in the Talmud, that is in the combined **Mishnah** and **Gemarah**. A great many new laws and ceremonies which a Hebrew was supposed to observe in his home, as well as in his public and spiritual life, were added to the laws of Moses. Every commandment of the **Torah** had its numerous ramifications in the Talmud. The **Torah**, for in-

stance, commands that the Sabbath be observed by resting from daily labor, but the Talmud prohibits even such "labor" as could hardly be so classified, e. g., carrying small objects, lighting candles, plucking flowers, etc. To the various kinds of food which the Bible prohibits the Israelites from eating, the Talmud adds many others. It was not easy for a Hebrew to observe all these laws and rites, but they were rendered necessary on account of the peculiar situation in which the Hebrew people found themselves, for living as they did, in so many alien countries, the only means by which they could escape absorption was by adhering very strictly to a great number of national customs which singled them out from all other races. This is the only *raison d'être* of the innumerable Talmudic laws, thanks to which the preservation of the Hebrew national identity was actually achieved in spite of the persecution its members suffered everywhere for the sake of their religion and racial integrity.

The Babylonian Talmud resembles the Jerusalem Talmud only in that it belongs to the same Mishnah; their Gemarahl are different, the former being by far the larger and more exhaustive. The Babylonian Talmud therefore became more popular as a "code of laws" and as a text-book for students. The language in which it is written is a mixture of Hebrew and Ara-

maic (Chaldean). In the Mishnah, compiled in Palestine, words and construction are chiefly Hebrew; in the Gemarah, chiefly Aramaic, which language closely resembles the language of the Babylonian Hebrews of that time.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HEBREWS IN THE EAST, UP TO THE END OF THE EPOCH OF THE GAONS.

500-1040 A. D.

§ 64.

Disturbances in Persia. The Saburai.



AFTER the completion of the Talmud, the Hebrews in Persian Babylonia lived under very painful conditions. They suffered greatly from the arbitrary administration of the satraps (provincial governors) and from the fanaticism of the magi, priests of the fire-worshipping religion. At the beginning their ill-treatment drove them to revolt against the government, and the young exilarch Mar-Zutra led the uprising. This militant chief, drove the Persians out of the city of Mahuza and established himself with his army there as an independent ruler. His reign lasted for seven years until Mahuza was taken by the troops of the Persian king and Mar-Zutra captured and hanged near the city bridge. (About 520 A. D.) After that the Hebrews

were persecuted and oppressed with greater brutality than ever.

During the following seventy years, their situation under Persian rule changed sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse, according to the character of each new king. Order and peace were at last established in the Hebrew communities in the reign of the last of the Persian monarchs, Chosroes II (590-628 A. D.), famous both as a conqueror and as a ruler of great wisdom. In his lifetime the Hebrew communities once more lived under the rule of their own secular chiefs, the exilarchs and of their own religious teachers, the heads of the Talmudic schools.

The religious teachers of that time were no longer called "amoraim" but "saburaim" which means "those expressing opinions." As the Talmud was already complete, new laws could not be added to it, but the old ones it already contained could be studied, analyzed and expounded. This was done by the saburaim who studied the written text, correcting the mistakes that occurred in it, sometimes adding brief remarks of their own, and arranging its various parts in systematically. As before, the main Talmudic schools were in the two Babylonian cities of Sura and Pumbadita.

§ 65.

The Hebrews in Syria and Palestine Under Byzantine Domination.

When the great Roman empire split into two parts, the Eastern, or Byzantine and the Western or Roman (see § 56), Syria and Palestine became part of Byzantium. The situation of the Hebrews there was much worse than in Persia because Christian Byzantium treated all non-Christians of whatever faith with the utmost cruelty. The Christians hated the Hebrews with especial venom because they stood loyal to the old religion and they therefore brought all their influence to bear upon the emperors, and had laws for their oppression enacted wherever possible. The Hebrews were gradually deprived of their freedom of worship and other civil rights, and compelled to perform such civil duties as might benefit the state, being heavily taxed meanwhile. The Byzantine emperor Justinian (527-565), wrote in his edict concerning the Hebrews: "Let these people groan under the burden of taxation, but let them not enjoy any honorable titles; they shall remain in the contemptible condition in which they themselves allow their souls to remain." "Justinian's Code" (a collection of laws for the government of the state), contained a number of provisions for the disability of the Hebrews. Seeing them defenseless, the

Byzantine populace also attacked them often, robbing and killing them because they knew they could obtain no redress.

In Palestine, their ancient home, the Hebrews were more fiercely oppressed than ever. The Byzantines built churches and monasteries there, but forbade the Hebrews to build any synagogues in place of the old ones which were fast falling into decay. In some places they were not allowed to settle at all, and they were still excluded from entering the holy city of Jerusalem. Only in Tiberias where the Patriarchs had once lived, a community of considerable size had managed to survive, and many of the persecuted people still inhabited Syria, particularly the great city of Antioch, which was chiefly populated by Christian Greeks.

Oppression and indignities inflicted upon them by the Byzantine Christians provoked the Hebrews' furious anger and sometimes goaded them into open revolt. Once a sanguinary encounter took place between Greeks and Hebrews in Antioch which for once ended in a victory for the latter. They slew their enemies and threw some into the flames; even Anastasius, the patriarch of Antioch, met his death at their hands. But the uprising was instantly suppressed and many of the insurgents were executed or exiled from the country by order of the Emperor Phocas. (608 A. D.)

Several years later the Hebrews again seized an opportunity to revenge themselves upon their oppressors. The Byzantine emperor Heraclius and Chosroes III, king of Persia, were at war and when the Persians entered Syria and approached Palestine, the Palestinian Hebrews joined them against their common foe, the hated Byzantines. A wealthy Hebrew, Benjamin of Tiberias, financed the equipment of his co-religionists' army and in the year 614 the Persians, assisted by Hebrew reinforcements, captured Jerusalem where the Hebrews had for so long been forbidden to live. From there the victors overran other Palestian cities, killing the monks wherever they went, destroying churches and monasteries with the same fury with which the Byzantine rabble had destroyed Hebrew synagogues and schools in the past. The Persian domination of Palestine lasted for about fourteen years, but with the deposition of Chosroes and the ensuing unrest in Persia, Byzantine power again came into the ascendant (628). Heraclius reconquered Palestine and meted out severe punishment to the Hebrews for having allied themselves with his enemies. Many were killed and many others fled to Egypt.

The Byzantines, however, did not long remain masters of Palestine. The religion of Mahomet had begun its invasion of the Orient and the warlike Arabs, who were its ardent adherents,

deprived both Byzantine Christians and Persian heathens of their Asiatic dominions.

§ 66.

The Hebrews in Arabia. Mahomet.

Hebrews had lived on the Arabian peninsula since the earliest times. Some of them had settled there while the Judean kingdom still flourished; others had fled thither much later to escape the Byzantine or Persian rule. The Arabs looked upon them as a kindred people, for they too traced their descent from Ishmael, son of Abraham, the progenitor of the Hebrew people. Certainly both nations belonged to the same Semitic race, and their languages closely resembled each other. The Arabian Hebrews differed little from the native Arabs in their mode of life. They lived in small groups or tribes named after a common ancestor, such for instance, as the tribe of Benu-Nadir, or the Descendants of Nadir. The eldest male member of the tribe was its chief. Their principal occupation was cattle-breeding but many were engaged in trade with India, Persia and Byzantium. They were a warlike people like the Arabs from whom they differed only in religion, for the latter were still heathens. In the VIth century A. D., however, the Hebrew faith began to take hold of them and whole tribes would follow the example of the chiefs and embrace Judaism.

In the opening years of the VIth century a small kingdom where the Hebrew religion was dominant, arose in Southern Arabia, otherwise known as Yemen. Abu-Kariba, the king, having become acquainted with certain Jewish sages, adopted their faith and converted many other Arabs. (500 A. D.) His successor, the young Youssuf-Dhu-Nuwas was an ardent Jew and took all his new co-religionists under his protection. When he learned how the Christian kings and the clergy of Byzantium were oppressing the Hebrews there, Youssuf resolved to make reprisals upon the Christians in his kingdom. He gave orders that all the Byzantine merchants who passed through Yemen on their way to India were to be seized and put to death; he imposed heavy taxes on all the Christians of his kingdom and persecuted them exactly as the Byzantine emperors were persecuting the Hebrews in their territories. These actions of Youssuf aroused the fury of the Christian kings who had heard of the oppression of Christians in Yemen. The ruler of the neighboring land of Ethiopia (Abyssinia) who had been converted to Christianity, came to the rescue of his fellow-Christians and hordes of Ethiopians swarmed into Yemen and proceeded to devastate the country. Youssuf's Arabian Hebrew troops could not withstand this invasion, and foreseeing his impending doom, the young king rode

on his horse to the summit of a high rock and leapt into the sea, so that the enemy might not capture him. (530 A. D.) Thus fell the only Hebrew kingdom in Arabia.

The continued intercourse between Hebrews and Arabs prepared the latter for the adoption of a belief in one God. At the beginning of the VIIth century there appeared in Arabia the founder of a new religion which, like Christianity, had been based upon the Hebrew Scriptures. The prophet of this new faith was an Arab named Mahomet, who had long associated with Hebrews and through them had learned the Bible and the principles of monotheism. Later on, he combined these old religious axioms with certain Arabic legends and founded a new religion which he called Islam (devotion to God). He declared himself divinely inspired, a messenger sent by God to reform the "faith of Abraham." The first article of his creed was: "There is no God but (one) God, and Mahomet is His prophet." Many Arabs adopted the new faith and recognized Mahomet as the prophet. At first the newcomer tried to convert the Hebrews, but with few exceptions, they refused to accept him as God's messenger on earth, above the Biblical prophets. When the founder of Islam settled in the city of Medina (622) and began to exert great power over a multitude of Arab "true believers," the inevitable conflict

with the Hebrews began. Spreading his religion "by the sword," Mahomet and his warriors attacked the Hebrew tribes of Benu-Kainukaa and Benu-Nadir, which resisted bravely, but could not hold out against the Arab warriors. Many fled to foreign countries but others, who were taken prisoners, were executed by order of the prophet. One of the women captives, the beautiful Zainab, became the prophet's wife. This brave Jewess, resolved to avenge the wrongs Mahomet had done her people, gave him one day a piece of poisoned meat to eat. But one of the prophet's attendants tasted it before him and died; the prophet himself spat out the fatal food just in time to save himself, and when he asked Zainab why she had done such a thing to him she answered: "You caused untold suffering to my people, and I thought that if you were merely a conqueror then I would have brought peace to my people by killing you, but if you were really a prophet God would warn you of my intention and you would not be harmed." Mahomet had her executed.

The fact that the Koran, the holy book of the Mahometans contains many statements by the prophet which are hostile to Judaism is explained by such incidents as the above.

At first the Hebrews suffered greatly from the religious intolerance of the Mahometans but later on these two kindred faiths relaxed their

mutual enmity and the Hebrews lived more peacefully under Islam than under Christendom.

§ 67.

The First Caliphs. New Exilarchs.

Before his death, Mahomet enjoined the Arabs to spread his religion over all the world by force of arms. As soon as the prophet died, (632) the warlike Arabs overran the whole of Western Asia, proclaiming "There is no God but God and Mahomet is His prophet" wherever they went. The first Arab Caliphs (the Prophet's governors) were excellent generals. At the head of their troops they easily conquered Syria, Palestine, Persia and Egypt. The valiant Omar, second Caliph, acquired world-wide fame as a military leader. In 638 he took Palestine from the Byzantines, and entering Jerusalem, laid the foundations of a mosque as the Mahometan temple was called, on the site of the former temple of the Hebrews. Jerusalem, once a holy city in the eyes of Hebrews and Christians, thereafter acquired the same character for the followers of Islam. Omar did not allow the Hebrews to live in Jerusalem and oppressed them and the Christians impartially.

After the conquest of Palestine and Byzantium by the Arabs, the Hebrews' situation became more secure. During the reign of the fourth Caliph, Ali (660), when the Arabs had

gained possession of the whole of Western Asia and Northern Africa, the victorious Arabs rested from their campaigns and began to set their new territories in order. The Caliphs granted the Hebrews perfect freedom in their domestic affairs and the Hebrews of Babylonia were again allowed to have their own chiefs chosen from their own people. The first of these chiefs, or exilarchs, under Arab rule was one Bostanai, a descendant of the old exilarchs who traced their descent in a direct line from King David. The following legend tells how Bostanai acquired his power:

One of the kings had ordered the whole family of the exilarch in Babylonia to be exterminated, and the order was carried out. The sole survivor was the widow of the murdered exilarch Hanninai, who, though about to bear a child, had no hope that her condition would save her life. That night the king dreamt that he had cut down all the trees in a beautiful garden (*bostan*), but when he raised his axe to fell the last one, an old grey-haired man appeared before him and struck him such a blow in the face with his axe that the king was thrown bleeding to the ground. He began to beg the old man to have mercy on him and swore that if he would only spare his life he would not touch the last tree but would on the contrary take great care of it. When the King woke he noticed traces

of blood on his forehead and thereupon summoned a Hebrew sage to interpret the dream. "The garden which you had cut down," said the seer, "means the descendants of the Hebrew King David whom you caused to be killed, and the last tree is the child the widow of the slain exilarch is about to bear." The King ordered that the best care be given to the widow and when she had given birth to a son named him Bostanai after the garden of his dream. Bostanai grew up and became deeply learned in religious law, to the great joy of the Babylonian Hebrews. The king loved the modest, gentle youth and made him exilarch. The Caliphs ratified Bostanai's appointment and one of them gave him in marriage the lovely Darah, daughter of the Persian king, who had been taken prisoner after the conquest of Persia by the Arabs.

§ 68.

The Exilarchs and the Gaons.

After the death of Caliph Ali, the former dominions of Persia were ruled by Caliphs of the dynasty of Moabia, called the Omayyads (661-750), whose capital was Damascus in Syria. During their reign, the Hebrews' autonomy was assured; their communities were ruled by two kinds of officials, secular and ecclesiastical. The secular power was vested in ex-

ilarchs, descendants of Bostanai, who were the Babylonian Hebrews' representatives before the caliphs and local Arab officials. The exilarch lived as a wealthy and influential statesman; his sumptuous raiment betokened his exalted position, he maintained a private bodyguard and rode in chariots of state. The exilarch derived the income for the support of his court from revenues raised in certain districts designated by the caliph and he also had the right to levy special taxes in the communities over which he ruled.

The ecclesiastical power belonged to the heads of the two principal Talmudic schools in Sura and Pumbedita respectively. A new title of "gaon," meaning "great, exalted," was bestowed on both holders of these positions though the Gaon of Sura ranked above his colleague of Pumbedita. They shared with the exilarchs the office of supreme judges of the people. Although the office of exilarch was hereditary in the family of Bostanai, it had nevertheless to be ratified by both Gaons, which act was attended by a special ceremonial. A procession of laymen of the highest standing in the community and of scholars headed by both Gaons, led the newly elected exilarch into the synagogue where a great concourse of people were assembled. This took place on the Sabbath morning when solemn services were held in the

synagogues. The exilarch sat on a high and beautifully decorated platform in the form of a tower; the Gaon of Sura approached this platform, knelt before the exilarch and sat down next to him at his right hand; the Gaon of Pumbedita, after the same preliminaries, sat down at his left hand. The exilarch next read a passage from the Torah, which he followed with a sermon, or if he could not preach himself, the Gaon of Sura performed this part of the ceremony in his stead. Lastly a special blessing was asked upon the exilarch, the chiefs of the academies, the teachers and students and all the communities that supported the academies by their donations. The rites ended with a solemn procession from the synagogue to the exilarch's palace where a dinner was given in honor of the scholars and eminent laymen and Arab officials.

The Gaons played a much more important part in the spiritual life of the people than did the exilarchs. The Hebrews were ruled at that period by their own laws as expounded in the Bible and Talmud, and the influence of the gaons, as those laws' chief interpreters, was practically unlimited. In the academies of Sura and Pumbedita, where the Talmud was read and studied and its laws expounded, there were always as many scholars as they could accommodate. Twice a year, in spring and autumn,

scholars would visit both schools and discuss, under the leadership of the gaons, matters pertaining to the people's public and spiritual life. The Hebrews in other countries besides those in Babylon applied to the gaons for decisions upon moot questions of religion and they thus became the legislators for all Hebrews inhabiting territories under Arab rule.

The Jewish communities of Persia, Syria, and Egypt were in constant touch with those of Babylonia and all were united under the spiritual rule of the gaons. Achai, one of the Babylonian gaons, emigrated to Palestine where he wrote his famous book "Questions" (Shaaloth) which contained his explanations of Talmudic laws and various religious instructions. The energy of the gaons spread the study of the Talmud among the Hebrews in every land and the people came to regard it universally as a sacred book.

§ 69.

The Caliphate of Bagdad; the Sect of the Karaites.

In the VIIIth century disturbances broke out in the Eastern Caliphate and led to the fall of the Omayyad dynasty in Damascus. The last of the Caliphs of Damascus perished in the struggle and the power passed to a new dynasty, the Abbasids. The Abassid Caliph, Al-Mansur

(754), transferred the capital of the Arab kingdom from Damascus to Baghdad in Babylonia, whereupon the entire kingdom became known as the Caliphate of Baghdad. The new caliphate extended over Persia, Babylonia, Armenia, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, so that all Hebrews living in these countries became the subjects of one king. Their main intellectual center, however, remained in Babylonia where their exilarchs and gaons still lived.

At that time religious dissensions began to arise among the Hebrews, a great many of whom resented the elevation of the Talmud to the status of almost equal holiness with the Bible itself. They found the strict laws of the Talmudists very irksome and would gladly have disregarded them. As the Sadducees of olden times had rebelled against the "verbal teachings," so these opponents of the Talmudists now formed a party which claimed that only the laws of the Torah and not those of the Talmud were God-given and therefore obligatory. The head of this party was Annan-ben-David, a descendant of the Babylonian exilarchs.

About the year 760, one of the exilarchs died childless and his two brothers, Anai and Haniah, contested the succession with great bitterness. The scholars of the academies of Sura and Pumbadita and the local gaons denounced Annan as a heretic and elected his brother as exil-

arch, whereupon Annan's followers rose in revolt and created a rival exilarchate to which they elected the other brother. The news of these quarrels reached the Caliph Al-Mansur who recognized the choice of the gaons and ordered Annan to be thrown into prison. When the rebel was released he left Babylonia and settled with his followers in Palestine. Deeply embittered against the gaons, Annan came out in open opposition to Talmudic Judaism and founded a new sect. Like the ancient Sadducees, he claimed that only the laws of the Bible were of divine origin and as for the religious laws that had come down as "verbal teachings" since the time of Ezra and had been collected in the Talmud, these, he considered the mere creations of men, and their observance, so far from being compulsory, was even in direct contradiction to the Biblical commandment which declares that nothing can be added to or detracted from the laws of Moses. The watchword of Annan's sects was "Search closely in the Scriptures." His adherents called themselves Annanites after their master, but later took the name of Karaites, i. e., "people of the Scriptures," or followers of the Bible. They called their antagonists "Rabbinites," i. e., followers of the Talmudic teachers who were called Rabbis. Fearing persecution in Babylonia where the power of the gaons was great, the Karaites

emigrated to Palestine, and Annan, as the legend relates, built his community a synagogue of their own in Jerusalem. He expounded his teachings in the "Book of Laws" (Sepher-ha-Mitzboth) of which only a few fragments have survived the ages.

The Karaites differed from the Talmudists in their manner of observing the most important laws and rites. The Sabbath was very strictly observed; so literally in fact did they follow the Biblical law, that they would not even kindle a light on the Sabbath eve but spent the whole night in the dark; on that day they ate no hot food and tried not to be away from their homes; they suspended all manner of work, even refusing to render service to those lying dangerously ill, and so forth. The Karaite scholars of a later period succeeding in modifying the extreme rigidity of these Sabbath laws, however.

The Hebrew calendar introduced by the Patriarch Hillel II was abolished by the Karaites who re-established the primitive method of designating the holidays by observing the phases of the moon. They always celebrated Shebuoth on the fiftieth day after the first Passover Sabbath and it always fell on a Sunday. Their Passover "matzoth" (unleavened bread) was always baked of barley flour to remind them of the "bread of poverty" mentioned in the Pentateuch. During the autumn holidays (Succoth)

the Karaites did not use palm and myrtle leaves at the services but only to adorn their houses. Chanukah, or the national holiday of the As-moneans they did not celebrate at all, because it was not mentioned in the ancient books of the Bible, but they held two days of Purim. The feast in commemoration of the destruction of the temple was transferred from the ninth to the tenth day of Ab. The Karaites also altered the order of the prayers the dietary and slaughtering laws. Marriages even between very distant relatives were prohibited. Some of the laws were observed far more rigidly by the Karaites than by the Talmudists.

Legend records that Annan, the founder of the Karaite sect, died in Palestine venerated as a saint by his followers and cursed as an apostate by the Rabbinites. The mutual hostility of these two sects was so intense that they would neither intermarry nor even eat together, just as though they belonged to two different religions. Gradually the Karaites drifted away altogether from the rest of the Hebrews, forming as it were a distinct nationality very much as the Samaritans had done in former times. The disciples and successors of Annan supplemented and greatly modified his doctrines.

§ 70.

Intellectual Life at the Time of the Gaons.

Arab culture attained its zenith under the Caliphate of Baghdad which endured for two,

centuries. Trade and industry as well as sciences and arts flourished in this vast kingdom, in which such enlightened caliphs as Haroun-al-Raschid and Al-Mamun (786-833) lent their patronage to every effort to spread learning and culture, so that their names became famous all over the then known world. The Hebrews did not allow the Arabs to leave them behind in intellectual development. Besides students of the Talmud and other religious literature, they could also boast learned astronomers, physicians, mathematicians and philosophers who used the Arabic language in their writings.

Disputes between the Karaites and Talmudists as to the correct interpretation of various passages of the Bible frequently occurred and led to a considerable increase of interest in the study of the Biblical language which had fallen into disuse among the Hebrews of the East who spoke and wrote ordinarily either Aramaic or Arabic. The first requirement was to establish rules for the correct reading of the Biblical text. Since the earliest times the books of the Bible had been written down in characters without vowel signs, that is, without the dots and dashes which placed underneath the consonant characters now indicate vowels. The reading of these vowel-less texts were learnt by heart and taught by each generation to the next; only expert readers, scribes and bibliophiles were familiar with

them, and the ordinary readers had to decipher their Bible as best they might, a feat to be accomplished only with extreme difficulty. A frequent source of erroneous reading lay in the fact that one word was capable of many meanings, depending on which vowel was used. Finally the Babylonian scholars, with their colleagues of Palestine, created in the VIIIth century a system of symbols which were placed over or under the consonant characters, in order to standardize pronunciation on a basis of ancient rules (massoreth). These orthographers were called "massorethes."

The reading of the Biblical language encouraged many to write it also. A great many prayers and hymns were composed in the curious verse forms of the ancient tongue; they were called "piutim" and their writers "paitans" (poets). Many of these hymns were used in the synagogues as supplements to the holiday prayers and were later included in the "Machzor."

§ 71.

Saadia, the Gaon.

During the Arab domination in the East, a number of the gaons acquired great eminence, but none was as famous as Saadia-ben-Joseph. He was not only a Talmudist but a great thinker, deeply learned in all the sciences known to that period. He was born in 892 in Egypt.

where Arabic culture flourished, and in his youth he had already begun writing books. At the age of twenty-two he was the author of a work in Arabic against the sect of the Karaites which he entitled "The Refutation of Annan's teachings." He tried to prove in this treatise that the Bible could not have existed without the later supplements of the Talmud because a great many of the laws as they appear in the Biblical form are very obscurely expressed, and some of the fundamental articles of the Hebrew creed, such as the reward in the hereafter, for example, are not mentioned in the Pentateuch at all. Saadia's book raised a storm of protest among the Karaites. Eminent members of the sect replied to the young writer in various books, endeavoring to defend their doctrines against his arguments, and to each in turn he replied. At the same time he was occupied with works on Hebrew grammar and he also translated the Bible and Mishnah into Arabic. His works of scholarship and his courageous struggle against the Karaites made him famous far beyond the borders of Egypt.

Just at that time the chief gaon of Sura died. The Babylonian scholars invited Saadia, though he was then only thirty-six years old, to fill this exalted position (928) and he left Egypt to become the head of the oldest academy

in Babylonia. He did not keep it long however. He came into conflict with the exilarch, David-ben-Zaccai, on the matter of a certain litigation over an inheritance which the latter settled according to his own personal interests instead of according to the law, calling upon the gaons of Sura and Pumbadita to uphold his decision. Saadia's colleague complied with the exilarch's request, but not so Saadia who denounced it instead as contrary to the law. In vain the exilarch threatened to dismiss him if he should persist in his refusal to ratify the verdict, and at last Saadia found himself expelled from his academy and another gaon appointed in his place. He retorted by excommunicating David, and electing another exilarch with the help of his followers. Thus two opposing parties were created in Babylonia, each bent on winning the support of the Caliph of Baghdad. David bought his victory by means of heavy bribes and Saadia, in disgrace, was obliged to leave Sura (933). He settled in Baghdad where he lived in complete seclusion for four years, wholly absorbed in scientific studies and in writing several books on theological, philosophical and philological subjects.

In the meantime the Caliph who had dismissed him died and the disgraced gaon's party grew strong again. A reconciliation between him and the exilarch was effected without un-

due difficulty and Saadia was restored to his former post in Sura. But the troubles he had suffered and the mental strain of his labors had undermined his health and he died in 942 at the early age of fifty years.

Saadia's chief work upon which his immortality rests, is the book called "Beliefs and Opinions" and deals with the essentials of the Hebrew religion. This book, written originally in Arabic, was afterwards translated into Hebrew under the title of "Emunoth-ve-Deoth." In it Saadia tried to settle the eternal conflict between religion and science, struggling against both the superstitions of the masses and the skepticism of many scholars. "My heart aches," he writes, "when I consider the ways of certain 'rational beings,' and my soul grows anxious for the fate of our people the children of Israel. I see at this time a great many who believe, but whose faith is not pure and whose opinions are not clear; and on the other side, many skeptics take pride in the fact that they denied everything, hold themselves superior to men of convictions, not realizing that they are themselves the prey of delusion. I see some who are sunk in a sea of doubts and others who struggle in a whirlpool of delusion, and there is no swimmer who can come to their aid." Saadia tries to prove that the fundamental truths of the religion of Israel are

founded on facts and are not incompatible with reason.

He expounds the essentials of Judaism in the following manner: God did not create the world from matter already existing but created the matter for His purpose. The Creator is One; He had a certain aim in view when He made the world. The king of His creatures is man, to whom He gave a soul and the capacity to distinguish between good and evil and to learn the truth. But man could never have found the path of truth in life without the help of God. Therefore God gave him the "revelation" (of Sinai) which is a code of commandments and laws designed to direct his activities along the path of virtue. Man is endowed with free will; he may observe or disregard the commandments of the revelation as he chooses, whence the idea of merit, of virtue and of sin. Pious deeds purify and ennoble the soul, bad ones stain and degrade it. Justice demands that the righteous attain bliss and that the sinners suffer in consequence of their straying from the ways of truth. But since full reward for merit is impossible on earth, the final and just reward is only bestowed in the hereafter. Death is not the end of being but a change for a different existence. The souls of the righteous rise to the abode of peace and blessedness while those of the unrighteous roam without

rest over the earth. At a certain time designated by the Lord, the resurrection of the dead will take place in connection with the advent of the Messiah. (Saadia interpreted "resurrection" in the Talmudic sense, i. e., meaning that not only the souls but the bodies of the dead would rise again.) After the Messiah's advent the reign of supreme justice would be established on earth.

§ 72.

The Last of the Exilarchs and Gaons.

In Saadia's time, under the Caliphs of Baghdad, Hebrew culture reached the apex of its development. Shortly after his death, however, the disintegration of the caliphate set in, and the spiritual and social life of the Babylonian Hebrews began to deteriorate also. The office of the exilarch as supreme head of the community diminished in importance, and remained so for a long while after David-ben-Zaccai died.

The academy of Sura followed the same downward trend, and the Hebrews of neighboring countries who had always contributed to its support ceased to send donations, so that at last this ancient seat of Talmudic learning had to be closed. The chronicles tell of a final attempt to save it when four great scholars went abroad to collect money for its maintenance. But their ship was seized by Arab sailors in the Mediter-

ranean, and all four rabbis were taken prisoners. They were taken to different countries, two to Egypt and North Africa, one to Spain and the last one was never heard of again; he vanished without leaving a trace. The three survivors tried to encourage Talmudic learning in the places where their fate had cast them, and thanks to their energetic efforts, the Hebrew communities in which they found themselves were able to dispense largely with the help of the Babylonian gaons in settling their religious problems.

After the closing of the academy at Sura the only remaining school was the one at Pumbedita, of which the local gaons were the heads. The last Pumbedita gaons were Sherira and Hai, his son. Unlike Saadia, these two gaons were strict Talmudists and spent no time on secular sciences or on philosophy. The most important of Sherira's works is his "Message," which deals briefly with the history of the activities of the gaons and the history of the compilation of the Talmud. Hai wrote several books on religious law; his most popular work, however, was a collection of moral maxims called "Musal-Haskel." He died in 1038 and Hezekiah, a grandson of the former exilarch David, succeeded him as chief of the academy at Pumbedita. Hezekiah was supposed to be both exilarch and gaon, but he did not rule.

very long. Denounced before the Caliph of Baghdad this Hebrew prince was seized and thrown into prison where he died in 1040. His sons fled to Spain.

The power of the exilarchs and gaons of Babylonia was gone. The Talmudic schools deteriorated; the scholars left the home of the Talmud to settle abroad. The ancient land of Babylonia, which for so many years had been the spiritual home of Israel, at last had to yield its place to other countries where a new life for the Hebrews began, no longer in the East however, but in Europe in the West.

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